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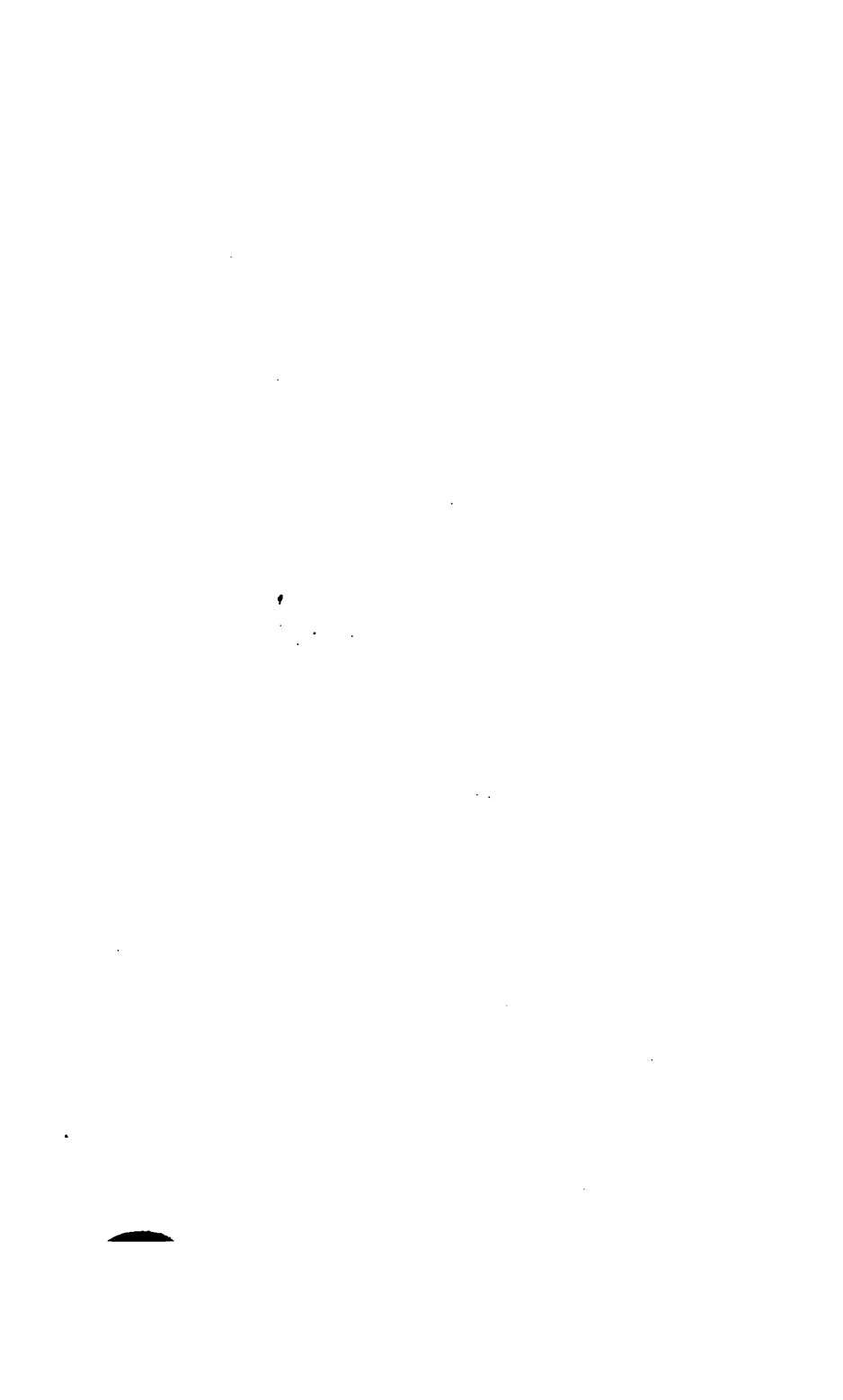
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1853



R. Graham Thomas

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THE CROOK AND THE SWORD,

THE HEIR OF LORN,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

FRANCIS FITZHUGH.

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TO

CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," "THE SALAMANDRINE," ETC., ETC.

DEAR SIR,

In dedicating to you the following pages, written at different periods during the intervals of business, I afford myself an opportunity of expressing the admiration I entertain for your genius and versatility as a poet.

As your muse in the "Legends of the Isles" has travelled close to the scene of one of my efforts, I look to you as one to whom it is most appropriate, and to whom I have most pleasure in inscribing this little volume,—a dedication which can add no new lustre to your name, but can only give gratification to,

Yours, ever faithfully,

FRANCIS FITZHUGH.

EDINBURGH, 12th April 1853.



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THE CROOK AND THE SWORD.

THE CROOK AND THE SWORD.

By the dark shadow of yon vocal wood,
Where zephyrs meeting kiss and fall asleep ;
Where sun-scared Twilight dons her sylvan hood,
And rests with Fancy in the dingle deep ;
Where trembling wild-flowers, woo'd by vagrant bee,
'Mid moss-beds cluster o'er the tinkling rill ;
Where the soft plaint of ring-dove from the tree
Mingles with bleatings on the distant hill—
I wander oft, when noontide's burning sun
Bids panting Labour seek the grateful shade,
To list the song, to gentle ears unknown,
The plough-boy carols to his bright-eyed maid.
Oh, few and simple are the joys of man
Where rural labour claims his daily care !

He weeps o'er sins, but never feels the ban
Of vice, born 'mid the city's fetid air.
When from the pastures of his daily toil
He steps aside, or leaves the beaten track,
The song of birds, the flowers which deck the soil,
The smiling skies have tongues to call him back ;
But the poor denizen, in vice's throng,
Is shut from calm creation's voiceful fane :
Conscience, though ever ready with her thong,
Hath no persuasive angels in her train.

Here let us follow, in its sinuous way,
The footpath straggling through the tangled wood ;
Softly—nor scare the linnet from the spray,
Straining its mellow throat in joyful mood :—
Now by the streamlet—now by grassy knoll—
Now o'er the toppling crag with pine-clad brow,
Where, peeping through, the stretching plains unroll
Their fruitful fields—the hills their flocks of snow.
Close by yon stile, where stand three nodding trees,
Three old grey elms, the patriarchs of the scene,
Sighing in concert to the upland breeze,
A rural burying-ground lies half unseen.
Here rests the stalwart rustic in his bed

Of kindred clay, and here his faithful wife :
Here his loved babe, whose gentle spirit fled
Ere it had roughed the world's inglorious strife.
Beside them, too, the simple maiden lies,
Whose blooming cheek surpassed the rosy morn ;
When forth she fared, with brightness in her eyes,
And songs which hushed the blackbird on the thorn.
Short was her life, but bright, and pure, and gay ;
Her charms awoke the rustic Muse to verse ;
Shepherds from distant hills came here to stray,
And tune their reeds her beauties to rehearse.
Deep was the sorrow through this little world,
When rude November sent his early storm,
With death surcharged, too surely, darkly, hurled
Against this blooming floweret's fragile form.
Ah, who may read the Councils dread on high,
That shower destruction on our moral worth ;
Or tell the cause why youth and beauty die,
While vice and sickness linger on the earth !

See how those graves with flowers are speckled o'er,
A graceful tribute from the parent dust ;—
Nature's bright epitaphs ! whose truths ignore
The venal Muse, and sculpture's flattering bust.

The poor man is the child of Nature. She
Must tell the story of his life obscure :
So from her vernal lap she scatters free
The simple wild-flowers o'er the good and pure.

Beneath that mound apart, choked up with weeds,
By rank, coarse nettles guarded round and round,
Where newts and toads, dark emblems of his deeds,
Crawl like the curst familiars of the ground,
A sensual outcast rots ; this tells a tale
Of youth mispent, and manhood steeped in lust ;
Of loud excess, which spread its blight and bale
Wherever Virtue's warders fled their trust.
Or tells of one whose narrow grovelling soul
Fed on the love of Gold, and daily schemed
His own aggrandisement ; abjured the whole
Of man's divine emotions ; vainly dreamed
Of age in ease and affluence, and saw
His fellow-men bowing before his god :
But age brought fears, grief pinched his hungry maw,
Till death took all save this unhallowed sod.

But hush ! who lingers 'neath yon blasted elm,
Bending in tearful silence o'er a grave ?
No boisterous grief can his lone heart o'erwhelm,
Sorrow is voiceless with the truly brave !

'Tis a poor soldier, weary, worn, and old,
A constant pilgrim here for many years,—
Through seed-time, harvest, and when winter's cold
Hath pinched his limbs and gealed his burning tears.
Meet scene for Pity! let her kindly try
To soothe, to cheer, to prompt some new relief:
Ev'n now a smile lights up his wandering eye,
He loves to tell the story of his grief.

Down in the valley, where the silver stream
Shadows its mirror 'neath the thicket's shade,
Where sun-flies dancing in each struggling beam
Hum songs sonorous in the dreamy glade;
Where the blue smoke, untroubled by the breeze,
Round the lone cottage curls and melts away,
Or softly hangs reluctant 'mong the trees,
Mine eyes first saw the glorious smile of day.
Fond memory lingers ever on that spot,
And paints my youthful joys and sports anew;
The hardy rustic seldom mourns his lot;
His store is scanty, but his wants are few.
To wander forth when morning's breezy voice
Called the blithe shepherd to the sun-tipt hill,
To hear the milkmaids sing, the birds rejoice,

Gave then a pleasure which I dream of still.
To climb the mountain with some rude compeer,
And scare the foxes from the rocky glen,
To raise the muircock, start the bounding deer,
Were the wild pastimes of my gay hours then ;
Or, by the broomy banks of that broad stream,
I drove my father's herd of docile kine ;
Sheltered by bush from storm or noonday beam,
I conned some lesson from the Word divine.
Ah! when I gaze upon the ruddy cheek,
The sunny brow, youth's laughing, hopeful eyes,
I weep to think how soon they all may wreck
On Passion's tide, 'neath life's inclement skies.

The morn was bleak, and from the northern hill
Loud sleety blasts came whirling down the vale,
The cowering robin, at our window-sill,
Sought kindly shelter from the pelting hail,
When first I left my home : my father stood
Thoughtful and sad, and filled with manly fears,
Yet speaking blithely ; sure I never could
Thro' sin bring sorrow to his waning years.
My kind, good mother wept and kissed her boy,
And placed a Bible in my trembling hand ;

Bade me beware of him whose snares destroy,
And keep the pathway to a better land.
Oft on the hill I turned to wave adieu,
And take a tearful survey of my home ;
But the fierce blast shut out the darling view,
Shrouding the loved ones in its heartless gloom.

In distant vale I tent my master's flocks,
And watched for years his sheep upon the hills ;
Lonely I mused with wild-goats 'mong the rocks,
And dreamt of former joys and present ills ;
Till one day, playing truant to my trust,
Sickened at patient, unrequited zeal,
(For honest natures scorn as most unjust
Neglect from those intrusted with their weal,)
I wandered to a neighbouring farm, and there
By the cool shadow of a birchen wood,
Saw such a maid, so smiling, sweet, and fair,
As Fancy could not paint in happiest mood.
Transfixed, I heard her sing a plaintive air,
Then saw her lay aside her sylvan crook ;
Softly disclose her snowy feet so fair,
And bathe them in the happy crystal brook.
From my safe covert long I gazed, and drank

Such draughts of love and beauty to my soul,
That when she left, my beating heart's blood shrank
Back, till confusion o'er my senses stole.
Day after day I wandered to that spot,
And when she came not, all was sad despair :
I dreamt some spirit, framed to mar my lot,
Had stolen my heart, then sought her native sphere.

At last she came, and I, with trembling tongue,
Essayed to converse with the startled maid ;
Told her my love, my joy, my fear, and hung
Long on the havoc that her charms had played.
Silent she stood—erect, and coldly proud—
But such a softness in her hazel eye,
My faltering accents warmed and grew more loud,
Till love-born eloquence cast Fortune's die.
I met her daily on the heathy hill,
And fondly wrapt her in my shepherd's plaid ;
Our hearts grew one, and she, with native skill,
Culled me such flowers as all her thoughts conveyed.
Oh, joy ineffable ! too sweet to last !
Our fairest summers have the direst storms ;
So the bright sunshine of our love o'ercast—
A parent's wrath burst forth in loud alarms.
My Lucy's father heard with hateful scorn,

The wide-spread rumour of his daughter's love ;
A shepherd poor, a hireling bred and born,
Has on the mountains snared his little dove.
No more at noon fair Lucy dared to roam :
But love's wings cannot, will not, be at rest ;
When stars shone out she softly left her home,
And fled for comfort to my beating breast.
Oh! these were hours of mingled fear and bliss—
The stillness of the night was made for love ;
When every sigh, and every parting kiss,
By watchful stars is registered above.
Time sped away, but Lucy's father still
Was unrelenting, for his soul was proud :
So one calm night, when seated on the hill,
We schemed to leave the tyrant's cold abode.

Hushed was the voice of Labour; from the tree
The screech-owl broke on echo's sylvan sleep ;
A silvery mist hung o'er the shadowy lea,
Where wimpering streams made music soft and deep.
The dusky bat chirped in his wheeling flight,
And o'er the hill the yellow moon arose ;
The startled blackbird, rising to the light,
Gave one shrill note, then nestling sought repose.

So soft a beauty hung o'er all the scene—
So calm, so mute, not one disturbing breath—
That Nature seemed in majesty serene,
Some princely fair one, beautiful in death!
We met: and having breathed a hasty prayer,
Fled from the prison of our ardent love.
On, on, in silent breathlessness we fare,
By silver stream, deep scar, and woody grove;
My gallant Lucy, nerved by love and hope,
Scorns to take rest, but bravely skips along
O'er beetling crags, like fearless antelope,
And cheers our path with merry laugh and song.
Two days, three nights of ceaseless anxious toil,
And then we witness from the green hill's breast
Dark, heavy wreaths of smoke, which constant coil
Round the black throne of Commerce in the west.

We soon were wed; and many happy days
Were spent in all the thoughtlessness of love.
Amused, diverted with the townsman's ways,
Saw wonders new wherever we might rove;
But the scant earnings of a shepherd's life
Were ebbing fast; stern truth did coldly turn
To paint the horrors of the coming strife.

Oh, let the poor man bravely, nobly spurn
The worldling's laugh, him who profanely cries
That love can not survive the storms of want;
For true love strengthens as our cares arise,
And mutual tears revive the drooping plant!
'Twas long before I gained a meet employ;
Long ere my hand could guide the mazy thread;
But hope and patience reap their fruit with joy,
And perseverance yields its daily bread.
Lucy could spin; and she with frugal care
Eked out our earnings, till our scanty board,
Smiling with plenty, and with better fare,
To Charity its tribute could afford.

When through the web of Heaven's morality
The world and Satan weave their fatal thread,
The unsuspecting mind may not descry
The evil working till too widely spread.
Armed with the power of argument and wit,
With vain and subtle theories profound,
Philosophy on Reason's throne will sit,
And hell-born doctrines vauntingly propound.
'Mid the close factory's unwholesome air,
Those morbid seedlings take a speedy root;

The mind, debarred from all that's fresh and fair,
With false excitement tends the exotic shoot.
With the proud names of Liberty and Love,
Of glorious Freedom and the Rights of Man,
These gaudy, empty gewgaws only prove
A poison to the luckless artizan.
'Tis nobler far through worth to rise to power,
Than level power and justice with the dust;
Oh, that I had not lived to see the hour
When first I deemed the laws of Heaven unjust !
Young, witless, unreflecting, I was led
Down to the sceptic's places of debauch,
Where Riot snatched the crown from Wisdom's head,
And mocked her sleeping in the midnight watch !

Poor Lucy, now neglected, sat at home,
And wept in sorrow by her lonely hearth ;
Her eye descried amid the gathering gloom
The opening grave of all her peace on earth.

When youth and beauty tinge with rose the cheek,
And joy and pleasure gild the path of life ;
When Hope's bright angels softly, sweetly speak,
In flattering accents to the blooming wife,
How dread the pang which rends her aching heart,
When death lays low the partner of her bliss,

To feel she now from him must ever part,
The source of all her earthly happiness.
But what the anguish of the injured one,
Who sees her influence fading fast away ;
Her cherished idol blindly doted on,
By Sin's insidious scions led astray ?
'Tis a slow poison to her fevering blood ;
A canker eating at her joyless heart ;
O, death were peace, and Lethe's darkling flood
A blest oblivion from the rankling dart !

Poor Lucy wept, but did not show her tears ;
She gently chid me for my love estranged ;
Told me her dreams, her bodings, and her fears,—
Her pale face spoke the rest,—her looks how changed !
“The cause,” the club, the love of social glee,
All claimed their portion of my weekly hire :
Where plenty smiled, where mirth was wont to be,
Want sat with ruin by my smouldering fire.

He who is conscious of an evil deed
Spurns with rebellious pride the just rebuke ;
The smitten heart retires to inly bleed,
Yet scorns to own it by a word or look.
I felt I wronged the woman of my choice,
But pride and madness revelled in my veins ;

I cursed the gentle chidings of her voice,
And gave to brutal drunkenness the reins.
My tongue gives up its office, nor can tell
The hateful scenes which hurried on my doom ;
My brain was filled with all the fiends of hell,
Which madly drove me from my ruined home.

War's hollow pageant walked the echoing street,
Where marched in gaudy guise the raw recruit ;
The act was rapid as the thought was fleet,—
I joined the corps, and donned the martial suit.

When thro' the night-cloud of debasing sin,
The first faint streaks of moral consciousness
Broke on my soul, deep-mouthed Remorse within
Called up her furies : how my soul did press
Against its prison-door to flee away !
By night, by day, in barrack and at drill,
My poor deserted Lucy seemed to say,
Though you have wronged me, Come ! I love you still.

Marched from the bulwarks of my native land,
For foreign shores I stemmed the angry wave ;
War's loud revengeful trumpet on the strand
Of wavering Spain called forth the allied brave.
The boiling waters rose with boding roar ;

The cold winds whistled through my weary soul ;
I turned with horror from my native shore,
And looked despairing where the wild waves roll.
Peace had gone out and left her dwelling drear,
Her lamp extinguished, and her hearth unlit ;
Round the lone chamber groped dark-shadowed Fear,
And large-eyed Fancies through the doorway flit.

When Saragossa's heroes bravely stood,
And drove the invading legions from the field,
The Gallic eagle rose in haughty mood,
Impatient of defeat, too proud to yield :
Summoned its hosts, and spread its direful wing,
Resolved to subjugate, to crush the band
Of Britain's friendly warriors, and to wring
Slavish submission from the apostate land.
Under the banner of the gallant Moore,
I saw War's forge red blazing from afar ;
Learnt what a soldier's spirit must endure ;—
Forbearance is the greatest attribute in war !

By the lone watch-fire, when the silent moon
Shed dreams of glory through the sleeping host,
When brave and happy spirits back had flown
To home, to friends, to scenes of pleasure lost,

My troubled soul would start at every sound,
Or wake from dreams more hideous than the truth ;
And when the foe approached, with fearless bound
I sought destruction at the cannon's mouth.
When on Corunna's bright yet fated field,
Where warlike Scotland lost her fairest flower,
This shattered arm proved gallant Napier's shield,—
I fell exulting in the longed-for hour.
But no ! Heaven had not summed my sufferings up ;
Just retribution made its full demand ;
Still must I drain life's dark and bitter cup,
A lonely prisoner in a foreign land.
Years dragged along, years filled with pain and woe ;
Nor need I paint the horrors of my cell ;
When freedom came my heart was sunken so,
No joys, no hopes, my aimless soul could swell.

Tired with his midday course, the Autumn Sun
Listlessly lingered on the western hill ;
Gazed on the fields of space where he had run,
And smiling kissed the brow of Evening still.
Like guardian angels, bright and fleecy clouds
Came forth to lead him to the halls of Night.
High up in air, in straggling noisy crowds,

The dusky rooks to distant wood took flight ;
The withered leaves, along the furrowed road,
Danced to the music of the fitful breeze ;
The falling pine-tops pattered in the wood,
And magpies prated 'mong the tall thin trees.
The robin hopped beneath the hawthorn row,
The sad companion of the yellow leaves ;
The homeward herd through echoing lanes did low,
And twittering sparrows nestled 'neath the eaves.
The teal-duck to the mountain-tarn took wing ;
Twilight had hung her lamp above the hill ;
When I, a weary, wayworn, guilty thing,
Passed by the gateway to the ruined mill.
Time had not changed the aspect of my home ;
The cottage with the ivied porch was there ;
The monthly rose still hung in brilliant bloom,
Like young hopes living through the chills of care.
The sweetbrier hedge that fenced the garden
 round,
The rustic seat beneath the old yew-tree,
The grassy knoll, where fairy rings were found,
Were all unchanged : the change was all in me.
I gazed with sadness on these scenes of youth,
While bitter tears coursed down my hollow cheeks ;

Oh, for one hour of innocence and truth !
Of sunny childhood's gay and guileless freaks !

Where can my poor, deserted Lucy be ?
I sought in vain through all the city's din :
Back to the hills the stricken doe would flee,
And seek for pity 'mong her nearest kin.
Perchance she found a haven 'neath this roof ;
My mother's heart was ever keen to feel ;
She might not dare a father's stern reproof,
Or stand the thrust of insult's two-edged steel.
My footstep trembled with a nameless fear,
As I drew nigh the cottage of my birth ;
Bright laughing faces, through the lattice clear,
Smiled round the clean and snugly blazing hearth :
But all are strange ! not one familiar form :
Does Memory fail to catch one longed-for look :—
Has Death's cold hand, and Time's chill wreathing storm,
Sealed this dark volume of life's fated book ?

I shared the stranger's hospitable store,
And warmed my shivering limbs before their hearth ;
Told tales of war, till every visage wore
A livid look that checked the youngsters' mirth.

In homely phrase my simple hosts relate
What wondrous changes ruthless Time had wrought;
Tell of my parents' death,—poor Lucy's fate!
A mournful tale, with tears and sadness fraught.

'Twas night, 'twas winter, and the full-orbed moon
Rode through the heavens in her silver car;
The muffled streams sang out a solemn tune;
O'er Nature's bosom hung a white cymar.
The hills lay sleeping 'neath a spotless shroud,
Like giant graves of undissolving snow;
The azure arch, untravelled by a cloud,
Smiled in the waveless frozen lake below.
My trembling Lucy, at her father's door,
Stood like a vagrant tapping, meek and cold,
Asking for shelter, where, for houseless poor,
No pallet ere was spread, or pittance doled.
The tyrant rose and drove her from his roof,
Heaping dread curses on her fenceless head;
Mocking her tears with cold and heartless scoff,
Bidding her share her chosen husband's bread.
Oh, loud and fearful was the curse that night
Which rose from every household, far and near:

The shepherds raised their arms of nervous might,
And called for vengeance instant and severe.
From hill to hill quick spread the mournful tale,
Until it reached the valley of my birth ;
My father journeyed forth through snow and hail,
And brought the houseless wanderer to his hearth.
My mother wept to see the hapless thing,
And gently asked her for her much-loved son ;
But Lucy's thoughts, on frenzy's fitful wing,
Had fled for ever from calm Reason's throne.
She sat for days beside the crackling fire,
Mute as a dove deserted by her mate ;
Spoke not of Luben, but in gaudy tire
Moped o'er the embers, emblems of her fate.

When Spring breathed perfume down the opening vale,
And spread her daisied carpet on the mead ;
When larks and linnets told the welcome tale,
And gave the key-note to the shepherd's reed ;—
Lucy would wander by the river's side,
To gather wild-flowers for her sunny hair ;
Speed to the green-wood where the cuckoo cried,
And weep and wildly sing alternate there.
Her eyes had lost their speaking softness now ;

Filled with a restless and unsteady light ;
Like wild-fire flashing through dark Twilight's brow,
The voiceless lightning of a summer night.
One day she wandered far away from home,
And came not back when birds their vespers sung :
When night closed in all rose through fields to roam,
And search and shout the echoing groves among.
They searched all night—through morning's early dawn—
But echo's lessening voice alone replied ;
Off to the mountains, like a bounding fawn,
She must have fled, and 'mong the stern rocks died.
Where the dark torrent from the mountain-tarn,
Lashed into foam leaps o'er the beetling crag,
Far from the shepherd's hut, 'mong muirlands barren—
The undisputed empire of the stag—
They found her lying by the water side,
Cast like a storm-blown heath-bell from its flood,
Some snowy blossom thrown upon its tide,
Then tossed ashore in fitful freakish mood.

This is her grave ! O do not spare your tears ;
Such innocence as this deserves them all ;
Nor treat me with disdain : through changeful years
I've sought forgiveness here and ever shall.

At this blest shrine I'll yield my latest breath,
Give back to Time my sword, my banner furled ;
Firm to my post until the drum of Death
Shall beat to quarters in a better world.

NOVEMBER 1852.

THE HEIR OF LORN.

[THE scene of the following poem is laid in that part of Argyle-shire called the Mull of Kintyre. The castle of Dunaverty, whose ruins are still to be seen on the summit of a high and solitary rock picturesquely overlooking the sea, was one of the strongholds of the M'Donalds of the Isles, and was the arena of many battles between the Goths and Celts, when the Scandinavian warriors invaded the Western Isles and adjacent coast of Scotland. The period chosen for the story is about the beginning of the thirteenth century, long after the arrival of St Columba on these shores; but during the existence of the Celtic and Scandinavian superstitions, which so sternly opposed their dark and formidable front to the tide of Christianity, and whose remains are still traceable in the moral constitution of our Highlanders.

Elric has been adopted as the name of the reigning chief, as suiting the style of the poem better than any borne by the descendants of Somerled. The catastrophe of the story is founded upon a legend, the subject of one of the fables of Marie, an early writer of Normandy.]

PART I.

THE battle's won ; the clash of arms is o'er ;
The ships dismantled bask upon the shore ;
No sound is heard ; the bright and tranquil sea
Falls rippling close by fair Dunaverty :
No object moves to mar the peaceful scene,
By golden beach, blue wave, or mountain green,
Save on yon castle's high and frowning wall,
Where the lone warder's measured footsteps fall ;
And as he turns from buckler, helm, and spear,
The sun's rays glance in flashes bright and clear.
O'er the calm tide he casts his searching eye,
The bark, the sail of foeman, to descry :
All sleeps beneath noon's broad unclouded smile,
From Ailsa Craig to Sanda's holy isle.

Far, where Hibernia's misty mountains rise,
The stretching waters kiss th' impending skies :
Rest ! rest ! the rude yet trusty warder calls ;
From tower to keep the whispering echo falls.

On throne of iron Elric sits in state,
To counsel friends, to seal the prisoner's fate.¹
Before him lie the spoils of battle o'er,
Gems, treasures, arms, and banners stained with gore :
Around the hall stand knights of high degree,
Squires, vassals, serfs, who look most rev'rently,
And hear the wise decisions of their lord,
Nor dare to question by a look or word.
Beside the throne, reclining at his knee,
Lies Elric's daughter, full of modesty,—
A lovely maid, whose high-born mind and soul
Well mates a form which never knew control,—
A form that rose and bloomed as Nature may,
Like twilight warming into early day.
Around her neck and shoulders, clust'ring close,
Hang ringlets brown, dark, glossy, free and loose ;
No gem nor golden circle decks them now,
Nor wild-flower gathered where the heath-bells blow ;
Nature's own child ! 'tis she who decks her hair,
And tints her blooming cheek with mountain air.

Her downcast eyes are blue as evening sky,
Ere the pale moon bids lingering daylight fly ;
Like stars clear glittering, on advancing night,
She lifts them beaming with unfeigned delight :
They change in colour with her changing mood,
To sober grey, in thought, in solitude ;
But now they beam to hear her father speak,
Whilst smiles and blushes revel on her cheek.
Her sloping shoulders and her yielding waist,
Such as the Grecian artist would have cast,
Are clothed in vesture of the grassy green,
High and close fitting,—not too high, I ween,
To hide the graces of her neck, but show
The snowy whiteness of the charms below :
Gold trims her vestment round the wrist and
neck,
And spotless pearls her crimson girdle deck ;
Her ample skirt of flowing green hangs down,
In long and graceful folds, till nought is shown,
Save point of toe, just peeping like the fawn
From bushy brake, when startled at the dawn.

“ Those arms are thine, brave Fillan, nobly won
From huge Norwegian chieftain’s haughty son ;

Take them and hang them in thy father's hall,
Thy friends to gratify,—thy foes appal :”—
Brave Elric cried, “ In gallant style that day
You gained new laurels for thy house, Carskey !
And these be thine, and that gay banner tore,
In deadly struggle bathed in foeman's gore ;
The desperate stroke, which made the bravest reel,
Came well from thee, thou son of hardy keil ;
The well-worn honours on your father's brow
Through you gain glory, and seem brighter now !
To thee I give this shield and goblet rare,
To grace thy festive halls, gay Ballyshare—*
Poor emblems of thy hospitable heart,
So quick to feel, so ready to impart ;
Also, this sword, for on the battlefield
No knight his falchion can more ably wield.
This gem of choicest lustre, ruby bright,
Chaste pearl, and topaz full of sunny light,
To deck thy lovely daughter's forehead pale,
I give to thee bold Lord of Glenadale.
This trusty lance, and shield of Scandian cast,
Well suits a knight who battles to the last ;

* Machrيرهoch is the ancient name of this property, but the modern one is adopted as more euphonious.

The gnarled oak, the hardy hazel tree,
Which grace thy hills, are not more firm than thee
To stand the shock of elemental war,
Than thou the hosts of warriors from afar!"

Thus to each knight the gracious Elric gave
Some well-prized trophy, guerdon of the brave!
"With this bright gem I cannot part," he said,
And placed his hand upon his daughter's head.
"Long have you sued, fair knights, yet sue in vain,
Nora ne'er weds while Elric lives to reign :
The young, presumptuous son of Lorn has tried
To gain the thoughtless maid to be his bride ;
But sooner far than foeman's wife she'd be,
I'll see her lifeless wedded to the sea.
Come one, come all, in these old halls to-night,
Let us rehearse the glories of the fight ;
With feast and song, with blithe and merry dance,
We'll teach the sluggish moments to advance ;
Thy ladies fair, thy daughters gay and young,
Must lend their charms to wake the minstrel's song,
For oft his lay will sing our clansmen's might,
And raptured paint the beauties of this night."

The hall is lit, the blazing sconces flare,
High burnish'd shields reflect the torch's glare;
A thousand spears, and banners gay and bright,
Festooned with heath give back the dazzling light.
"The feast of shells is spread," strains sadly sweet
Float through the hall: proud Elric smiles to greet
The stooping sire, the young knight tall and strong,
The blooming matron, then the smiling throng
Of youthful maidens, beaming like the morn,
When Spring's fresh gems Aurora's face adorn.
On throne raised high the chieftain takes his place;
Beside him sits his daughter, full of grace;
Her noble look, her stately mien, bespeak
A conscious pride that mantles on her cheek;
Not more that she is Elric's daughter fair,
Than that she's queen of all the beauties there.
There is one maid, whose simpler charms have power
To share with her the praises of that hour;
'Tis Meda pure, the pride of Glenadale,
With golden hair, dark eyes, and cheek so pale.
No jealous hate, no envious thought ere rose
To banish friendship's confident repose;
Both bosoms chaste, and generous as gay,
Smile on each other like unclouded day:

Rivals, and yet no rivals in their hearts,
Sincere in love, above deceptive arts :
The one face beams as 'twere through cloud of
 night ;
The other's head is bathed in flood of light.
Like satellites the humbler beauties are,
Which clustering round adorn the ruling star ;
Shining with joy to fill their modest sphere,
Nor vie in lustre with each bright compeer.
The feast goes on, the wine-cup sparkles high ;
Love, pleasure, mirth, illumine each laughing eye ;
Brave Elric pledges, in a flowing bowl,
Gay toasts which warm his unrelenting soul ;
Cheers on to draughts of bliss the jocund throng,
And bids the hoary minstrel sing his choicest
 song.

SONG.

He comes from the land of Cathulla ;
 He comes like the sun from the sea :
Like mists on the hills of Cathulla,
 His startled foes scatter and flee.

He comes from the land of Cathulla,
Like winds from the regions of snow,
Which blast the fair vales of Cathulla,—
So withers our chieftain his foe.

He comes from the land of Cathulla ;
He sails through an ocean of blood :
The traitors who rose in Cathulla
To the osprey and raven are food.

He comes from the land of Cathulla,
Where the songs of the bards never die ;
For the deeds of our chief in Cathulla
Are sung to the minstrels on high.

The chieftain, flattered and inflamed with wine,
Filled high the goblet to the Muse divine ;
Twined a gay laurel round the minstrel's head,
And, rising, thus in blindest accents said :—
“ Most noble guests, War lays his falchion down,
Peace decks our brows with Victory's brilliant crown ;
Far from these shores our hated foes subdued—
The wolf, the raven, and the eagle's food—
Have fled, by fear and valour's arm o'ercome,
To seek once more their cheerless caverned home.

Long let continued feasts our joy proclaim,
And let our songs be filled with glory's name ;
Our father's ghosts, who ever hear our lays,
And love to listen to heroic praise,
Shall, as their cloudy chariots northward fly,
Catch the sweet strains and sing them in the sky.
Let royal games, with feats of strength, be held,—
The race, the wrestle, and the weight propelled ;²
The gallant knight, who 's foremost on the field,
Must here with ease the festive weapon wield.
Let him whose deeds would claim the song of bard,
Here strive to gain his ladylove's regard ;—
A warrior's might, a warrior's proudest fame,
Shines tenfold out 'neath beauty's loud acclaim.
This night, so much I glory in the sun
Of cloudless victory through this battle won,
I do recall what erst I firmly said,
' I ne'er shall see my daughter Nora wed.'
To Saint Augustine's faith I long had thought
To give this virgin prize, whose prayers are fraught
With constant hymns to her who gave her birth,—
An angel now, too briefly seen on earth ;
But now, I swear, let weal, let woe betide,
This maid shall be that stalwart hero's bride,

• Be he a friend or foe, e'en Lorn's proud boy,
If without stop he bear her up Knockmoy !
At noon to-morrow, by the golden shore,
I meet my gallant clansmen on Strathmore,
In festive mood, in guise of Peace and Love ;
Be there, fair dames, with cheering smiles t' approve."

The chieftain stopt, out rung the warm applause ;
Up rose Carskey to plead the lover's cause :—
" Most potent Elric, much do I revere
Thy wise decisions, but, my lord, I fear
You rate too high the prowess of each knight,
So true of heart, so dauntless in the fight ;
Who would not die, if, by that glorious death,
His name with Nora's filled the minstrel's breath ?
Who would not rise and strike his rival's shield,
To meet in equal combat on the field ?
Where is the knight would shrink from war's alarms,
Nor fight, nor die, for Nora's peerless charms ?
But who may stand derision's mocking laugh,
When in this test of strength he gains but half ?
That knight would curse the day that he was
born,
When thus subjected to thy daughter's scorn ;

For none, though vested with great Odin's might,
Could bear her up that mountain's airy height."

"Away with fear!" the wily chieftain cried,

"'Tis courage gains a battle or a bride.

I keep my vow; but come, let mirth advance,
Let brave Carskey lead Nora through the dance;
Play out, gay minstrels, sound the viol and horn,
Till festal noise disturb the ear of morn!"

Lo! how it warms the withering heart of age,
And lights the eye of stripling, bard, and sage,
To watch fair Nora's form and smiling face
Flit through the mazy dance from place to place,
Like some fair spirit of ethereal light
Passing in glory through the shades of night:
The moving genius of that brilliant scene,
All grace, all smiles, with gentle sighs between!
Her face is gay, still in her lonely heart
She feels the pang which ruthless loves impart.
Each knight, with kind attention, presses hard
To share her smiles and claim her marked regard;
But ah! the youth who holds her heart in
 thrall,
Dares not appear to grace her father's hall;

The youthful Lorn, by birth a deadly foe,
Can never Elric's friendly kindness know !
Now, as the dance goes on, an errand page
Seeks the high throne, where sits the warlike sage.
With reverend bow he whispers in his ear,
Waits his behest, then seems to disappear
Like noiseless spirit through the hall's great door.
See where it opens ! Slowly 'cross the floor
A long-robed monk, with cowl which shades his glance,
Moves through the throng, and stops the wheeling dance.
With marked and awful step he gains the throne :
" Thy wish," says Elric, in respectful tone,
" I freely grant, yet rest with us a while
Till morning's ray points out fair Sanda's isle.
Then shall my boat, well manned, be at thy call ;
None tempt those seas at night, where tides appal
The wary seaman ;—with resistless force
They bear the labouring vessel from its course.
Here sit ye down, the wine-cup gaily fill ;
Or, if retirement suit you better still,
My duteous child will show thy place of rest,
And she, in lieu, may have her sins confessed.
Go ! Nora, lead this holy man away :
Friends, smile once more, the bard will sing his lay !"

With pallid cheek see Nora now advance ;
Ah ! does she tremble 'neath the monk's keen glance ?
He speaks not, but he lowly bows to all ;
Like two ill-mated souls they leave the hall.

SONG.

THERE is joy when the morn shows her face through the gloom ;
When the deer brush the dew from the heathbell in bloom ;
When the sun's rays smile brightly o'er hill, dale, and den,
And glance o'er the waters of fair Coniglen.
There is joy when the young Spring's first footsteps are seen ;
When she robes the high mountain in purple and green ;
When the voice of her infant song 's heard in the glade,
And the tears of her joy trembling hang from each blade.

There is joy when the summer breeze sighs o'er the sea,
And fills the white sail of our clansmen so free ;
Brings them back to the shore, where their hearts ever fill
With the pride of the thistle that waves on the hill.
There is joy when the bee, on its sweet-laden wing,
Seeks the mead where the wildflowers luxuriantly spring ;
Where the music ascends from the clear running stream,
And the skylarks sing out from the sun's dazzling beam.

There is joy, there is rapture, when Nora's bright eye
Sheds its lustre around, like the clear morning sky ;

When her smiles melt the mists from our mountains of care,
Bidding new hopes, like spring-flowers, to bloom gaily there.
Oh, there 's joy, boundless joy, when her footsteps so light
Dash the dew-drops of sorrow from flowers of delight ;
For the charms which gay Nature displays to our ken,
All centre in Nora of fair Coniglen !

PART II.

OH, glorious night ! oh, clear and cloudless sky !
Oh, calm-faced moon,—pale goddess throned on high !
Now o'er the stilly earth thy death-like life
Distils its opiate through the scenes of strife :
Now from the exhausted hero's nerveless hand
Falls the beclotted, soul-unfettering brand ;
Free from the gleaming helm, with flowing crest,
The pillowed head sinks down to balmy rest.
“ All nature sleeps ! ” The boar-pursuing hound
In some dark lair has dreamy slumbers found ;
The breathless stag lies in the darksome brake,
Or slakes his thirst unheeded by the lake ;
All voiceless now the valley and the hill,
Save the low music of the moonlit rill.

Choice hour of love ! when thought delights to swell,
And roam through halls where Fancy's offspring dwell ;
When by the babbling streamlet's pebbly bed,
Whose tuneful flood seems liquid silver shed,
Where weeping willows hang their mournful arms,
Like hopeless guardians 'gainst the storm's alarms,
Fond lovers meet to talk their sorrows o'er,—
Their deathless constancy, oft sworn before,—
To fill the fountain of their hearts with love,
No fate can alter, and no time remove !

Now o'er the quivering main the moonbeams glance,
And on each wave like silvery spirits dance ;
The mermaid's song comes swelling o'er the sea,
And wakes the echoes round Dunaverty.
High on the rock, around whose flinty sides
For ever fret the ever-changing tides,
The castle's walls uprear their beetling front,
In proud defiance of the battle's brunt :
Near to the bulwark, if you closely scan,
'Neath the dark shadow of the barbican,
You see two figures in this lone retreat,—
The monk and Nora holding converse sweet ;
No doleful theme of much-offended Heaven,
Of penance sore, or fancied sins forgiven ;

Their lips in warmer, kinder accents move,—
The soft yet fervent murmurings of love!


“Oh, Althos! wherefore did you hither come?
Why unprotected leave your parent home?
Why, without friends, thus risk the scorching fire
Of my dread father's unrelenting ire?”

“Nora! this is no risk for prize like thee;
When love is strong fear's thousand shadows flee;
I only stoop to wear this holy guise,
Lest with my prudence all my fortune dies.
Name but the deed by which you'd have me
prove

The truth, the ardour, of my changeless love,
And I do swear by yon bright cloudless moon,
Ere sleep my eyelids seal it shall be done.
No dread have I by sea or battlefield;
You guard my soul,—my breast, my bossy shield;
I have no awe of man, nor magic spell,
Of hero's wrath, nor shapeless ghosts from hell:
Fly with me now, nor fear the midnight tide,
Heaven speeds our bark, and soon you'll be my
bride!”

“ Hot and impetuous, Althos! better far
To wait the setting of malignant star ;
Till some kind orb with smiling radiance move
Athwart our cheerless sky, to aid our love.
Say, by what means, and whither could we fly,
With hope to escape my father’s eagle eye?
But Althos, tell me all thy dangers past,
The hardships braved to gain those halls at last ;
My heart throbs wildly when thy trials I hear,
Yet silence maddens and augments my fear.”

“ We left Dunstaffnage, ere to hazy morn
The sleepless warder wound his early horn ;
Passed where Dunolly rears its hoary crest,
Like some grey warrior peering thro’ the mist.
Our tiny bark, before the piping gale,
By sea-nymphs trimmed, Love’s banner for our sail,
Sped gaily on, ’neath Heaven’s approving smile,
And skimmed the wave that rests by Shuna’s isle.
The god of Day now drove his burning car
Up Heaven’s blue steep, and quenched the morning
star
In flood of light, which Nature’s charms unrolled,
And bathed the sea in waves of living gold.



The voiceful syrens of the mighty deep,
Whose watery eyelids know no midnight sleep,
Had ceased to fill the winds with doleful song,
Which echoing caves and sighing gales prolong.
Down to their caverned rest they'd sunk away,
Or gone, with winning mermaid throngs, to stray
Through grottos, where stalactites, shining bright,
Form spires and pillars alabaster white.*


“Fast o’er the glad and dancing wave we flew,
’Neath burning noon’s fair sky of wrackless blue;
Far, far behind we left our native shore,
Fair Jura’s isle, and Corryvreckan’s roar;
With prospering gales, and southward rolling tides,
We soon swept past green Gigha’s shelving sides.

“Round by the Moil’s high cliffs of azure hue,
Where eagles soar, where dives the white seamew,
Where warring tides in loud rebellion rise,
And hurl their misty thunders to the skies,
Our shivering bark forsook the pilot’s hand,
And reeling wildly struck the rocky strand.
Dread was my struggle with the surging wave
Which swept my comrades to a briny grave;
Long ere my soul o’ercame the stunning shock
Which left me lifeless on the flinty rock,

With burning brain, with step infirm and stiff,
I faltering clamb the steep o'erhanging cliff :
Sad were the thoughts which rent my aching breast,
As on the height I panting sank to rest.
With searching eye I scanned the angry main,
With hope to see my bark, my friends again ;
But like the hope which haunts the closing grave,
It woke fresh sorrow, and new sadness gave.

“ Keen is the grief which manly bosoms feel,
When chosen comrades fall by foeman's steel ;
When by their broken brand and faithless shield,
They lifeless lie upon the bloody field ;
Still from their gore springs up their fair renown,
And Fame and Glory weave a deathless crown ;
Still we can gaze with fondness on their clay,
And teach our hearts to tear themselves away.
But when the greedy wave, with changeless face,
Quick swallows all, and leaves no hope, no trace,
The frightful blank which gapes upon the soul
Startles the mind from Reason's grand control,
O'erwhelms the heart with deep and bursting woe,
And bids the sternest hero's tears o'erflow !

“ The evening sun now filled the glowing west,
And shed his radiance o'er Hibernia's breast ;



The main, whose angry voice was heard no more,
Now rolled in golden glory to the shore ;
Slow from the scene of deep despondency
I turned, fair maid, once more to think of thee.
Still, o'er my sea of thoughts, thine image bright
Shone through the gloom like some fair beacon-light,
To which my shattered hopes I firmly steer,
And cast o'erboard the burden of my fear.

“ I crossed the Going's strait and giddy height,⁴
Where wildfowls shriek, and witches ride by night ;
Where, 'neath the venturous traveller's slippery feet,
Steep, shifting rocks and foaming waters meet ;
High o'er his head the impending mountain towers,
Athwart whose brow the moving mist-cloud lowers.
On, on I marched, with footsteps firm and light,
Thy lovely figure full in fancy's sight !
With buoyant heart o'er hill and dale I went,—
The rugged mount,—the bare abrupt descent ;
Still, in my breast I checked the rising sigh,
To hear o'erhead the curlew's wailing cry.
The startled hare before me bounding ran ;
Up rose the grouse and whirring ptarmigan ;
Till from yon heathy hill beyond Carskey,
I watched the dying glories of the day,—

The pleasing twilight, that succeeds the glow
Of Evening's grandeur, clothed in clouds of snow ;
I stayed, and cast my roving, ravished eye
O'er mountain, shore, blue wave, and azure sky.

“ In the cold East, pale, glittering from afar,
Night's earliest lamp, a clear and dazzling star,
Mirrored its lustre in the glassy sea,
Where proudly rise thy walls, Dunaverty
Long did I gaze upon that orb of light,
Which bound me with a spell of heavenly might ;
From it, in thought, I saw a spirit move,
The god ! the guardian angel of our love !
On ether's wings, like dews that gently fall,
He slow descended on the castle's wall ;
Then with the rod of light which filled his hand,
Beckoned me on, and waved his elfin wand ;
Darkness prevailed and mocked my straining eye ;
Night's presence filled the chambers of the sky !

“ With brain delirious down the hill I flew ;
No fear of rocky precipice I knew ;
Nor did I stop till weary, worn, and sore,
O'erpowered I sank to rest upon Strathmore.
'Twas there from wandering warrior I heard
Of Elric's triumph o'er his rebel lord ;

Whose bones, with those of friends some fifty score,
Now lie to whiten on Hibernia's shore.

Dressed as a monk all gave me rev'rence due,
Lorn's hated garb well shrouded from their view ;
I passed with care the pile Columba reared,
When first the saint on Scotland's shores appeared.⁵
With holy awe I marked the sober light,
Which burns beside the altar day and night,—
Soft, struggling through the windows, arched and
dim ;

And silence slept where died the vesper hymn.

“ Soon at the castle-gate the watch I hail,
And tell my feigned and quick invented tale :
' A stranger monk, who wanders here awhile,
With secret news to friars of Sanda's isle.'⁶
Ah, Nora ! love gives birth to subtle thought ;
Shakes off the doubts with which the mind is
fraught ;

Wakes the dull, dormant impulse of the soul ;
And makes the timid brave 'neath its control !
Thy fluttering heart forbids us still to fly.
But why this fear ? for thee I'd freely die :
Come, then, my lovely Nora, scorn delay,
Yon cradling boat shall bear us far away ! ”

“ O Althos ! though I chide the heat of youth,
Still do I love thy bravery and truth ;
My heart is thine,—the breast of Celtic maid
Ne’er bore a heart whose plighted troth could fade :
I go with thee, o’er boundless seas to roam,
Far, far from friends to seek our island home.
But stay ! A thought hath struck me. On Strathmore
My father meets his clansmen : and he swore
Whoever bears me up the towering hill—
The dark Knockmoy—nor faltering standeth still—
Be he a friend or foe, whate’er betide—
The same brave knight shall have me for his bride :
We meet at noontide—none will dare to try—
Too proud to brook derision’s scornful cry.
In yonder cave beyond Columba’s pile,
Too much in shade to share the moonbeam’s smile,
The low, straight den, some steps before you reach
The cavern vast which yawns upon the beach,
There dwells a witch, most potent, dread, and sage,—
Of aspect wild, of hoary bearded age ;
One who has lived, some say, from Fingal’s time,
And saw that glorious hero in his prime.
If ’tis not true, still on her withered face
Time’s long-wrought furrowed wrinkles you may trace ;

She is most learned, and with her magic spell
Can troop the earth with bands of fiends from hell;
Can cull from every clime the balmy flower,
And turn its med'cine into poison sour;
Can suck the venom from the asp or toad,
And make it goodly season for our food:
All power hath she, that man is born to woe
Who wakes her wrath, or finds in her a foe.
She claims some kindred with Clan Donald's blood;
Beside my father's cradle oft she stood;
In secret played a foster-mother's part:
'Twas from her breast, some say, he filled his heart
With that dark stream of wild and boiling blood
Which ever marks his bold and daring mood.

“Go to her Althos, show this charm of gold;
Back to her mind 'twill bring bright days of old;
Say who hath sent thee,—fearless tell thy tale,—
Too gallant thou for hoary witch to quail!
Then by her spell, by morrow's evening tide,
O, glorious thought! O, Althos, I'm your bride!”

“Heaven bless thee, Nora! Oh, ye generous
Fates,

Who nurse the thought the mighty action mates,

Mark with your angel eyes my stern resolve,
Around whose orbit glorious deeds revolve ;
With prospering smiles my worthy efforts aid,
To realise the dreams of this fair maid !
Beside bold Resolution's bossy shield,
The sheathless two-edged sword of Truth I wield ;
Bind round my brow the casque of manhood's
 might,

And nerve my arm in Virtue's cause to fight !

 "Nora, I go. I pray our patron Saint,
That o'er thy couch his vigil care be lent ;
May the attendant spirits of his grace
Before thy sleeping eyes fair visions trace.
Give me one token, earnest of our bliss,—
One soft embrace, one warm yet holy kiss."

Away ! away ! Time plies his midnight wing ;
Rimfaxi's hoofs on Heaven's high keystone ring ;⁷
Hoist the portcullis—through the castle's throat—
Across the bridge that spans the watery moat—
Down the long spiral stair—the entrance past,
He gains the shore—but lo ! the night 's o'ercast.
Dark, rolling clouds that speak the tempest's might,
With shades portentous, shroud the face of Night ;

Live lightnings flash, and glare on all around,
Then pealing thunder shakes the dread profound.
An awful calm ensues,—more fearful far
Than the loud howling of the winds at war.
Lo ! through yon sable cloud, like vesture rent,
The Genius of the storm his face hath bent ;
Fierce are his features, wild his flaming hair,
Death fills his eye, his vengeful arm is bare.
Hark ! from the distance, o'er the trembling main,
Th' approaching sound of heavy hissing rain,
As if ten thousand serpents rose on high,
To spit their venom'd vengeance 'gainst the sky.
Night of unholy grandeur ! some dark power
Usurps the throne of goodness : horrid hour !
When from his palace, with the starry floor,
Peace flies away as Discord bursts the door.

The dauntless hero, heedless of the storm,
Blind to the scowling night's unhallowed form,
Hastens along, wrapt in his firm intent,
Nor thinks on aught but where his steps are bent :
Dark is the road, and filled with many a snare ;
Few go by night, and bold be they who dare.

No eye is on thee, Althos ! save yon star
Which smiles serenely through the tempest's jar ;

None sees thee cast thy holy robe away,
Lest o'er the witch it hold a sovereign sway.
Now in thy martial garb, beside the cave,
The rude blasts blow, and through thy dark locks rave ;
Thy noble face is turned to that pale orb,
Whose constant smile no warring clouds disturb.
This is thy guardian star ! well may you pause
To ask if Heaven will aid thy desperate cause ;
All hope of this forsakes thy mind, for lo !
It veils its face, and dimly answers—No !

Big with his purpose, heedless of his fate,
He stoops to gain the cavern's entrance strait ;
Slow through its narrow mouth he gropes his way,
And seeks the path that ne'er saw light of day.
Along its dark and rugged road he crawls,
Now low and close, now wide as Lorn's proud halls :
Onward he goes, but soon begins to fear
All is an idle tale, no witch dwells here !
A secret dread creeps o'er his shrinking soul ;
Through miles of darkness still he seeks the goal.^s
Ah ! here it stops, no further can he gain ;
Fear, next to madness, gathers on his brain,
As round and round he feels the flinty wall ;
The rocks have closed,—he 's in the Demon's thrall !

With stifling breath he winds his bugle horn ;
The rocks dissolve like mists before the morn :
A lurid glare quick bursts upon his sight,
And smoky phantoms dance before the light,—
Gloomy, unfathomable darkness round,
Dread as the tomb, untenanted, profound !

Now, to his rolling eye, a hideous form
Comes like the monster of the midnight storm ;
Skins of the beasts of prey are loosely thrown
Across a shape whose shrivelled limbs are shown ;
Fierce, wild, and ruthless ; long her matted hair,
Which ill protects a bosom dark and bare.
A rod of iron fills her skinny hand,
With which anon she stirs the blazing brand ;
A crown of brambles decks her wrinkled brow ;
Coarse is the fringe which shades her eye below ;
Out from its hairy, covered cell it stares,
As lightning through the gathered rain-cloud glares.
A smoking cauldron hangs above the fire,
Whose fitful blazes flare, and then expire ;
A wild succession of unearthly shapes
Glides down the throat where gloomy darkness gapes ;
Before the fire, on back of hard tortoise,
An old sly cat his one-eyed sleep enjoys ;

Heaped in a corner lie not far apart
The mystic tools of her divining art ;—
Toads, asps, and adders crawl along the ground,
Whilst slimy snails coat all the rocks around.

“ What want you here, pale son of faithless Lorn ?
Think you to brook dread Moila’s wrathful scorn ?
A curse hangs o’er thee and thy father’s head,
Unworthy sons of mighty Somerled !
That noble chief with dauntless valour stood,
And dyed his falchion in Norwegian blood ;
Drove from our sacred soil th’ invading host,
And gained for Freedom what her sons had lost.
Can then his offspring ever prove so base
As crave the friendship of th’ oppressor’s race ;
With dastard kindness grasp the open hand
Of those perfidious tyrants o’er our land ?
True, in my veins flows Scandinavian blood,
And much I’ve gained from them in mystic
mood ;
Still I am pledged to Natt’s young hornéd light,
To aid brave Elric and sustain his right.
Hear me, cold Lorn, and tremble when you hear ;
Hear me, ye mountain spirits ; lend your ear,


Ye ghosts of our great fathers, hovering still
In misty grandeur o'er the frowning hill ;—
Stoop from your cloudy chariots, gods of War,
Whose deathless deeds still thunder from afar ;
The time is nigh, a chieftain shall be born,
Whose hand shall smite the house of vaunting Lorn ;
Bid its dull badge the weeping cypress wave,
Shed tears of blood upon its hero's grave :
That chief fair Caledonia's fate shall turn,—
The champion king, brave Bruce of Bannockburn !”

“ A lie is on thy tongue, thou sin-bound slave ;
Hold ! or by Heaven it soon shall cease to rave ;
This sword, which noble Arcath bravely wore,
By warlike Congal forged in days of yore,
Shall send the poisonous current of your soul
In blighting streams to Hela's hopeless goal !¹⁰
Did not our fathers wed Norwegian blood,
And hath not Elric shared their festal food ?
Hath he not entertained them at his board ?
Yet Scotland's king must own the Island-Lord.
He then with Lorn hath joined in one great
cause,
Life, Independence, scorn of human laws.

Let the invader's foot but touch our strand,
And quick as lightning gleams our ready brand ;
Be he Norwegian, Saxon, kinsman dear,
His blood shall reek on many a clansman's spear !¹¹
As bright a flame, from Freedom's heaven-born fire,
Burns in our vales as ever lit Kintyre !
My gallant sire, as liberal as strong,
Ne'er fostered hate, nor nursed an ancient wrong ;
Were Elric half as generous as he
Foes would be friends, and bondsmen would be
free.

I sheath my sword ;—let thy prophetic tone
Die with the words that Truth would blush to own."

Long stared the witch with dark foreboding look ;
Her lips, her frame, with inward raging shook ;
Still as she gazed upon his youthful face,
Calm of expression, filled with manly grace,
And marked the bold, high spirit in his eye,
She felt her anger slowly passing by.
His gallant mien, his broad, expanding chest,
In coat of mail and flowing mantle drest ;
His well-made limb, in kilted garment free,
Displayed its vigorous beauty from the knee ;—¹²



A tall and stately youth of noble blood,
In all the majesty of Virtue, stood !
Her heart, long cold to Admiration's call,
Warmed as she gazed, and bowed to Beauty's thrall ;
She felt the woman struggling in her breast,
Then shrieked to find her weakness so confest.
The fire flared wildly up, then all was dark,—
A goblin sprang to fan the dying spark ;
The long retiring echoes caught the strain,
Like ghosts carousing o'er the troubled main.
Now he displays the charm upon his hand ;
The witch, in doubt, drags forth a blazing brand :
The knight recoils with horror from her grasp,
Her hands like toads, each finger like an asp.

“ I know what brings thee, silken-bearded boy ;
Youth, love, and folly ever seek their toy ;
But think'st 'tis meet that Elric's daughter fair
Should wed with thee, the lost Ergadia's heir ?
O Nora ! Nora ! why hast thou forgot
Thy father's pride, the glory of thy lot ?
Why did thy silly heart its strength forego,
And stoop to love thy country's deadliest foe ?
Deep, dark, and noisome is the endless draught
Which day from day through this drear life I've quaffed ;

But thou hast made my inky cup run o'er,
With what was bitter now embittered more :
Could my dried heart well up one teardrop now,
I'd shed it o'er thy folly and my vow ;
For, oh ! thou foolish maid, ye press too hard,
And ask o'erpayment of my sworn regard.
Still, I obey. Ye kindred spirits come !
We weave a spell to-night,—let Lorn be dumb ;—
Come in your mystic cloaks of dubious light ;
On bats, on owls' backs, wing your dusky flight,
Bringing the blood of serpents ; in your arms
Bearing your countless hard-extracted charms ;
In shell, on tree-bark, cross the dull, dark sea ;
Hither, heigho ! Oh, hither come to me !”

See how she stirs the cauldron, smoking white !
Around her dance fantastic spirits bright ;
Some green, some red, some yellow, others blue,—
A fiend-like mocking of the rainbow's hue ;
With maddening swiftness round and round they wheel,
Like fiery belt which makes the vision reel.
Slow through the smoke appears a livid hand,
Which drops some charm at Moila's stern command ;
The hissing pot gives forth a lurid gleam ;
The witch chants out, the spirits dance and scream.

'Tis seven times done! loud bursts a joyous
shout;
Away! away! dread darkness ends the rout.

The soul of Silence fills the goblin's room,
More fearful far than ghost-forsaken tomb,—
A voiceless void, nor cheered by ray of light,
Filled with the horrors of eternal night;
Althos appalled, transfixed by chilly fear,
Startles his own quick breathing's noise to hear.
Lo! in the distance, far amid the gloom,
A pale, white light and fairy spirits come;
Slow they approach, till Althos now may trace
The heavenly features of fair Nora's face;
Her eyelids closed in marble stillness deep,
She seems the angel of celestial sleep.
Her robe is spotless, pure as ether's wing;
Her bloodless hands a vase of silver bring;
Around her pathway airy sprites are seen,
With snowy pinions tipt with dazzling green.
A tinkling music leads the measure slow;
They deftly dance, and trip from toe to toe.
Now they advance, and by dread Moila pause;
She stretches out and grasps the silvery vase;

Like lightning's flash, or twinkling of the eye,
The heavenly Nora and her spirits fly.

"Stay! Nora, stay! Oh, whither hast thou gone?
Have thy cold lips forgot their kindly tone?
Hath the bright lustre from thine eyelids fled?
Say, do you live or mingle with the dead?"

"Unhallowed witch! by what detested art
Canst thou thus harrow up the human heart;
Hold the dark world of shades 'neath thy control,
To vex and fright the nerve-entangled soul?"

"Hush, prating boy, rouse not my sleeping wrath;
One other word, and short shall be thy path
On Time's fair globe; at once obey my beck,
And hang this silver vase around thy neck.
It holds a draught, whose charm, most potent, will
Strengthen thy frame to mount the lofty hill:
Pledge, ere you start, one half to Nora's eyes,
Then gaily bear away your willing prize;
Bound o'er the plain, and fearless face the mount,
Strong with thy quaffings from the mystic fount.
When midway up the high and heathy steep,
You feel a faintness o'er your sinews creep,

Drain the dear vase ; fresh vigour through thy veins
Will cool thy blood and ease thy languid pains :
Here, drink this cup to make the spell complete !
Farewell ! I hear the Morning's dewy feet."

A strange sensation fills the hero's brain,—
A sound like steeds wild prancing o'er the plain ;
He feels his body borne by them away,
Now tossed by waves, now washed by briny spray ;
The roaring waters fill his dreaming ear,
And shapes half formed dissolve and disappear.
At last a scene is pictured to his sight,
Bathed in the sun's unclouded golden light,
Ladies and chieftains crowd before his eyes ;
Elric is there, and there his lovely prize.
He bears her off, he speeds o'er stream and
strath ;
He boldly takes the mountain's airy path.
On, on he goes, but boundless seems the way,
He leaves the earth for realms of endless day.
He seeks the palace of the Scandian gods,
And wanders through great Odin's blest abodes ;
Shades his hot eyeballs from the dazzling rays
Of Balder's glory, which for ever blaze.

In Thor's vast halls he joins the brilliant throng
Of countless minstrels wrapt in holy song ;
Long, long he listens till they melt away,
Then waking hears this well-remembered lay :—

SONG.

WAKE, clansmen, awake, for the galleys are near,
And the shout of the Norseman falls harsh on the ear ;
From the ice-fettered North like a whirlwind they come,
And their swords have been forged at the gates of the tomb.

Like the lashing of waves is the plash of their oar,
And their trumps' brazen voice trembles back from the shore ;
Their helmets and falchions of steel gleam on high,
And their spears are like icicles turned to the sky.

The name of their leader is fearful in war,
And it rides on the wings of the winds from afar ;
Like the night-cloud they come rolling o'er the dark sea,
Awake ! for Ergadia's proud sons shall be free !

Behold ! where our standard of Freedom's unfurled,
The song of our triumph shall ring through the world ;
Our souls are unconquered, our hearts laugh at fear,
Wake, clansmen, awake, for the galleys are near.

Dreams are the shadows of impending fate,
Mysterious prophets of a future state,
Pointing, with immaterial fingers, slow
To fields of joy, or vales of endless woe.
They come, they go, and little do we reck
Their cheering pictures or foreboding beck,
Like twilight's shades which cross our path a while,
Which lengthen, deepen, die with Nature's smile ;
The morrow's sun proclaims another day,
And laughs the shades hesperian from our way.

With troubled thoughts young Althos opes his eyes,
Woke by the golden glories of the skies ;
Beside him sits a vassal stern and strong,
Who shakes the welkin with his warlike song ;
A leafy hazel crowns their cool retreat,
Where limpid waters ripple at their feet ;
Not far beneath the blue waves dance away
To Keil, Strathmore, and golden-shored Carskey ;
Dread Moila's caves assume the fancied style
Of mermaids' grottos viewed from Sanda's isle :
Young Lorn is lost mid wonder and surprise,
And doubts the daylight vision of his eyes.

" Say, stern retainer to thy chieftain's pride,
How to this beach I crossed the midnight tide :

Was't in yon shallop by the rocky creek?
From whom, whence came you?—tongue-bound caitiff,
speak!"

"My lord, how you came here I cannot tell,
The earth, last night, seemed wrapt in weirdlike spell;
Unshriven ghosts with tempests filled the sky,
And shook the bulwarks of Dunaverty.
This much I know, 'tis all I dare to say,
I found you here at breaking of the day;
Sent with commands to row you to yon shore,
I'm sworn to silence, therefore say no more;
The fairest gem 'mid all broad Alban's dames
Expects thy presence at our chieftain's games."

PART III.

HARK ! 'tis the conch, the warlike Elric comes ;
His gallant clansmen leave their highland homes :
Since morn's first clarion, wound by chanticleer,
Ere trilling skylark charms the listless ear,
The file and hammer's loud and painful jar
Proclaimed the day of feast and mimic war ;
The clash of shields, the brazen trumpet's voice,
Bid echo sleeping 'mong the hills rejoice.

He comes ! he comes ! Thor's godlike front you
trace ;

Fearless decision marks his war-worn face ;
'Mid countless bannered spears he takes the lead,
Reining in pride his black unharnessed steed.

The galley waits with many a heaven-turned oar,
To row his lovely daughter by the shore.
On poop of gold, 'neath awning gay and bright,
Fair Nora sits, in robes of spotless white,
'Mid the dark warriors gathering, fierce and proud,
Like a lone moonbeam through the troubled cloud ;
The reed and viol softly music play,
Like strains Æolian gently borne away.

The young Carskey, expectant on Strathmore,
Views the gay galley float along the shore ;
He bids his soul be still, yet strains his eyes
To see the form for which his bosom sighs.
Islay's proud Lord, with all his warriors true ;
Lochead's retainers, with their shields of blue ;
Stern Knapdale's sons, who ne'er threw lance in
vain,
In bristling columns rank along the plain.
Gigha's brave handful, dauntless, firm as steel,
Before whose diamond spears the foemen reel,
The island king, great Elric's throne surround,
Raised to the right on rugged rising ground.
'Mid all the martial glory of the scene,
The gilded banner and the helmet's sheen,

Monks robed and cowed from Saddell's sacred pile,
Move through the ranks and wear a solemn smile.

The Island King, the Lord of wild Kintyre,
Yclad in crimson and in gold attire,
Mounts his high throne; his followers gathered
there

With deafening shoutings rend the ambient air.
Away with shallop! by the galley's side
The young Carskey wades through the yielding
tide,

To bear the sylph-like Nora to the strand,
And courteous lead her to her father's hand.
Beauty surrounds the throne; with highborn grace
Fair Meda comes—the loving friends embrace.

The games go on; the soldier's choicest prize,
One smile approving from dear woman's eyes;
The bucklers clash, the darts shower from afar,
The shout, the onset, picture bloody war.
Two chosen champions meet upon the field,
To end the fight where hosts refuse to yield;
Their trusty falchions, gleaming in the air,
Crash on their shields, or cut the crest-plume bare;
Wounded, o'ercome, the vanquished leader falls,
And Fame's loud trump the victor's glory calls.

Hark ! from the sea a bugle-note is sent—
Ten thousand eyes look round in wonderment—
'Tis Lorn's bold son in yonder skiff that comes ;
His crested helmet wears no gaudy plumes ;
Shieldless he comes, nor draws his naked brand—
With signs of peace he bounds upon the strand.
With dauntless step he seeks the lofty throne,
Where Elric, frowning, sits with heart of stone ;
Where Nora kneels and clasps her father's
 knee,
And craves his smile on day of jubilee ;
Pleads for young Lorn, and shows the stranger's
 right
To join in games he swore were free last night :—
And ne'er was Elric's hospitable hand
Raised 'gainst a friendless foeman on his land.
 Oh, woman ! powerful is thy silvery tongue,
Persuasive, soft ; when by affection wrung
From the deep soul the tender accents move,
And light thy features with the rays of love !
 A pause ensues, still Elric wears his frown ;
So the perched eagle from the cliff looks down,
Surveys his prey, yet conscious of his might,
Spare the lone wanderer in its midway flight.

“ Wild and presumptuous boy, thy headlong course
Subdues my vengeance and disarms its force ;
Pity usurps dominion o’er my wrath,
Mingling with wonder at thy desperate path.
Twofold thy folly : first, to trust thy cause,
Like fenceless arm within the lion’s jaws;
Then should you fail to bear your prize away,
Hope’s star is lost ’mid clouds of dark dismay.
Long have I known the passion you have felt
For my fond child ;—a father’s heart would
melt

And yield to both, had not a feud been sworn
To end in death ’twixt us and haughty Lorn.
Others are here who love as well as thou,—
Lords of the soil ! sons of the mountain’s brow !
Proud as the stag, who by the crystal rill
Shakes his broad antlers on the heathy hill.
Thou art my daughter’s choice—oh, sorrow great
To me—to all !—but hear, bold youth, thy fate :—
If to the top of yonder mount you fail
To bear her up, or stop, or breathless quail,
Then from those shores be turned thy braggart
face,
Scorned by thy foemen, branded with disgrace.”

“ Hold, noble sire! by Him who rules on high
This shall not be, and I stand idly by;
I’ve woo’d this maid from childhood’s early day,
To grace my father’s mansions of Carskey.
Shall then my foeman, young, presuming Lorn,
Outrage my rights unpunished, save by scorn?
No! ’tis unjust,—if he be gallant knight,
Here let him prove his valour in the fight.”

As thunder-cloud rolls down the hill amain,
The soul-stung Althos rushes on the plain;
Like lightning’s bolt his falchion gleams on high,
Lit by the flashing of his eagle eye.
They meet, they pause, they hold their burning breath,—
An awful calm before the storm of death;
Then like the roaring of the cars above,
When gods make war and forth to battle move,
Their glancing swords and burnished breastplates clash,
And polished helms return the dazzling flash.
See how fair Nora, breathless, pale with fear,
Marks the dread combat; now, a prayerful tear
Dims her bright eye—“ Heaven shield the virtuous
brave!
End the fierce contest—oh, my Althos save!”

Far through the air a whirling falchion flies—
Carskey disarmed before his victor lies.

“I spare your life,” the haughty Althos said ;
“Hide, ’midst your clansmen’s ranks, your crestfallen
head ;
With your defeat receive my withering scorn,
Nor dare again to cross the path of Lorn.”

“Your gift I spurn, I treat with proud disdain ;
Cursed is the life which bears so deep a stain ;
By maid despised, by rival knight o’ercome,
’Tis time Carskey had filled an early tomb.
Nora, farewell! my sire, my friends,” he cried ;
“Heaven fend thee all!” then pierced his manly side.

Lo! from the ranks the aged patriarch comes,
Like grey oak blasted ’mid the leafy holmes ;
Short time since Hope, like Spring’s reviving sun,
Bade his heart blossom, blighted now and gone !
A father’s soul, when wintered o’er with years,
Warms ’mid the glory which his offspring wears ;
Views his own greatness in his son’s high name ;
Lives in his fortune, withers ’neath his shame.

“ Oh thou great God ! in whose almighty breath
Lurks the dread issue of man's life or death,
Why did'st thou give to our weak hands the power
To wipe from Time's dull dial our own short hour !
Oh, my poor son ! and was it all for this
I watched your infant smiles and shared your
kiss ;
Taught thy young hand to grasp the tiny spear,
To chase the wild roe, pierce the bounding deer ;
Raise thy broad shield, propel thy darts afar,
With all the nobler attributes of War !
Was it for this I proved God's moral plan,
And nursed those virtues that adorn the man ;
Gave to thy mind that high and lofty tone,
The soul's bright armour, worn by brave alone.
Oh, my poor boy ! oh, blackest, saddest day ! ”
He cried, and falling clasped the lifeless clay.

The heralds call, the weeping friends look round,
Althos hath tossed his harness on the ground ;
To Nora's peerless eyes he's gaily quaffed,
From silver vase, one-half the mystic draught.
She, like a nymph, whose fairy form is drest
In floating white, her beauties half confest,

Like statue stands, pale, modest, chaste, and bright,
Sprung into life, suffused with Nature's light ;
Bloodless her cheeks, till round her yielding zone
The manly Lorn's young, wiry arms are thrown.
The warm blush mantles ; as the current steals
Through her blue veins, the genial glow he feels.
She drops her jewels from her rounded arms,
Her brilliant necklace, clasped with holy charms ;
She slips her sandals from her snowy feet,
To make the burden less, his pace more fleet ;
Her very veil she gently casts astray,
Lest it should vex him or impede his way.

He bounds along, speeds o'er the level ground,
'Mid the wild wonderment of all around,
Takes by the streamlet and the woody dell,
Filled with strange vigour from the mystic spell ;
His easy step towards the hill is bent,
And breasting onwards meets the stern ascent ;
Firm is his foot, his limbs are free from pain,
Till midway, lo ! he panting seems to strain.
Now to the vase ! drink off the magic draught—
Gain the great prize—disarm the scoffer's shaft !
Nora oft presses to his lips the cup,
And bids him stay to quaff the liquor up.

Oh ! no, he cannot stop, whate'er it cost—
If he drinks now his slippery footing 's lost ;
She sees his visage change, and prays him rest—
His heart is beating as 'twould burst his breast.
Upward he strains, one other step, and then
“My Nora's mine ! I'm blest—I'm chief of men !”

Ah ! fatal step. Alas ! his struggle 's o'er ;
Life's fount is shattered—rent for evermore !
He grasps his side, his heart is cleft in twain ;
He kisses her he ne'er shall kiss again ;
He whispers “Nora,” cries unto his God,
Then lifeless falls upon the heathy sod.

As the wild seafowl o'er her stricken mate
Hovers in anguish, wails her ruthless fate,
So the sad Nora fills the startled air
With screams of horror and of dark despair ;
Tears her long locks, and beats her virgin breast ;
Throws her white arms to heaven, then sinks to rest ;
She clasps his corse, she murmurs by his side ;
Softly her soul takes wing :—so ebbs love's noonday tide.

Years have rolled past, yet on this heathy hill
When Summer's sweets the balmy breezes fill,
Flowers rich and fair, of genial roseate dye,
Raise their soft blood-stained bosoms to the sky;
Spring from the spot where dying Nora's hand
Spilt the charmed liquor on the barren land;
The dew which fills their cups hath sovereign power
To soften pain, to cheer the languid hour.
Ephemeral their life! too fair to last,
They shrink from night-winds, wither in the blast.
The tear which falls from Beauty's glistening
eye
Oft wets the bud which blossoms 'neath her sigh,
For many a love-lorn nymph, with weary feet,
Comes here to weep and make her woes complete:
The withering flowers to sadder sorrows move,
Emblems of death and unrequited love!

Nature's eternal voice for ever speaks:
The brow of Winter—Summer's rosy cheeks—
Autumn's ripe lips—the hopeful eyes of Spring,
A constant round of circling beauties bring.

'Mid those great joys some lesser voice is given
To catch our thoughts and bear them up to Heaven :
Some bird, some flower, some creature of the storm
Carries ethereal emblems in its form.
So when the blossom 's fairest on the hill,
When gales enamoured sigh and slumber still,
Two butterflies appear on wings so bright,
Spirits of Peace—ineffable delight !
Things of an hour—but ah ! so fair, so gay,
Earth cannot charm them one full summer's day ;
Back to the realms of sun and endless joy
Those lovers fly, where pleasures never cloy.

When storms go past and lift their mantles high,
And Hope's bright arch relumes the lowering sky,
Through the grey mist which crowns the mountain's
head,
Two forms appear, like visions of the dead ;
They look to heaven, then in their locked embrace
Melt 'mid the rainbow's hues, nor leave one earthly
trace.

Notes to the Heir of Lorn.

NOTE 1.

“On throne of iron Elric sits in state,

To counsel friends, to seal the prisoner's fate.”

No portion of history is so obscure as that of the Irish-Scoto Kings. The Dalriads landed in the Mull of Cantyre about A.D. 503, and Pinkerton holds that their territories did not exceed the limits of the present Argyleshire: others are of opinion that they overran the greater portion of the north of Scotland. Pinkerton believes them to have been descended from the Norwegians or Scandinavians; but Skene and Brown have combated this opinion with much success. They were, however, constantly embroiled in wars among themselves, and with the Scandinavian invaders, who ultimately subdued them. Early in the 12th century, Somerled arose and drove the Norsemen from the shores of Morvern, and was made Thane of Argyleshire and the Isles. In 1158 he married a daughter of Olaf, the Norwegian King of Man, by whom he had three sons, Dugall, Reginall, and Angus, the progenitors of the M'Donalds of the Isles, and the M'Dugalls of Lorn. By a previous marriage he had a son named Gillecillum, who fell with him at the battle of Renfrew, fighting against Malcolm IV. Gillecillum left a son called Somerled, who succeeded to his grandfather's possessions. “These were very considerable, comprehending the whole of the district of Argyle, the original

possession of the clan, and also that portion of the Western Isles called the Sudereys. For upwards of half-a-century after the death of Somerled, his grandson remained in undisturbed enjoyment of this princely inheritance, without offering any decided opposition to the government, yet covertly countenancing the numerous rebellions by which that period was distracted. In 1221, however, having taken a more active part in one of these insurrections, he brought upon himself the undivided vengeance of the government. But the first attempt made by Alexander proved unsuccessful. The King having collected an army in Lothian and Galloway sailed for Argyle, intending to disembark his force and penetrate into the interior of the country ; but his ships having been overtaken by a storm, he was driven and forced to take refuge in the Clyde. Nothing discouraged, however, he now resolved to proceed by land, and entering Argyle at the head of a large force, he made himself master of the whole county. Somerled, unable to offer any effectual resistance, took refuge in his insular domains, where, eight years afterwards, he perished by violence, though in what manner we are not informed."—Brown's *History of the Highlands*, vol. iv. part ii. chap. 3.

The clan Donald derived their origin from a son of Reginald, the son of Somerled, first by the daughter of Olaf, King of Man, who appears to have inherited South Kintyre, with the island of Islay ; but little is known of their history till the annexation of the Isles to the Crown in the year 1266. According to Highland tradition, this Donald made a pilgrimage to do penance at Rome, and obtain absolution for the enormities of his early life, and on his return made grants of land to the monastery at Saddel, and other religious houses, as a proof of his gratitude and piety.

NOTE 2.

“ Let royal games, with feats of strength, be held,—
The race, the wrestle, and the weight propelled ;

The gallant knight who's foremost on the field,
Must here with ease the festive weapon wield."

When not engaged in regular warfare, or in some of the almost constant predatory excursions of the time, the chief occupation of the ancient Highlanders was that of hunting. In the words of Holinshed, "whensoever they entered into league and amitie with their enemies, they would not live in such security, that thereby they would suffer their bodies and forces to degenerate, but they did keep themselves in their former activitie and nimbleness of lives, either with continual huntinge (a game greatly esteemed among our ancestors), or with running from the hills unto the valleys, or from the valleys unto the hills, or with wrestling, and such kind of pastymes, whereby they were never idle."—*The Highlanders of Scotland*, by WM. F. SKENE, F.S.A., Scot. Part i. chap. ix.

NOTE 3.

"Through grottos where stalactites, shining bright,
Form spires and pillars alabaster white."

There are several caves or grottos on the coast of Argyleshire remarkable for the beauty of the stalactites with which they are encrusted. Those elegant freaks of Nature are formed by calcareous water dropping through and hardening into petrifications, which take the most fantastic and delicately romantic shapes, pure as the whitest marble. No body can picture anything more fairy-like than the snowy galleries, supported by pillars of the most elegant and fantastic forms, whilst the floor, roof, and sides of the cave are all glittering with beautiful crystallizations. One cave of much celebrity in Strathaird, Isle of Skye, was visited by Sir Walter Scott, and immortalised by him in his "Lord of the Isles."

NOTE 4.

“I crossed the Going’s strait and giddy height.”

“The Going” is a footpath along the face of a precipice of immense height, not far from the present lighthouse on the Mull of Cantire. It is little broader than a sheep-walk; and as no support is afforded to the adventurer by the bare hill rising abruptly on the one hand, and descending as abruptly on the other, to the boiling surge beneath, it becomes a matter of no little difficulty and danger to cross.

NOTE 5.

“I passed with care the pile Columba reared,
When first the saint on Scotland’s shores appeared.”

The ruins of Kilcolmkill are situated near the shore, close to the caves of Keil. They are the remains of a plain, rude building. Tradition points to this as the spot where Columba’s foot first touched Scottish ground, after leaving Ireland on his way to Iona; and here arose the first Christian church in the west of Scotland.

NOTE 6.

“A stranger monk, who wanders here a while,
With secret news to friars of Sanda’s isle.”

The island of Sanda lies about two or three miles from the shore, directly opposite Dunaverty. The ruins of a chapel, and other religious remains, are still to be seen, together with the re-

puted grave of Saint Ninian, the patron saint. The holy brotherhood here, and at the more important monastery of Saddel, were of the Cistercian order, and wore a white robe, with a black cowl or scapular.

NOTE 7.

“Away! away! Time plies his midnight wing;
Rimfaxi’s hoofs on heaven’s high keystone ring.”

“Then the Universal Father took Night and Day and placed them in heaven, and gave them two horses and two cars that they might travel successively, one after the other, round the world. Night goes first upon her horse named Rimfaxi (or Frosty-mane), who every morning, when he begins his course, bedews the earth with the foam that drops from his bit: this is the dew. The horse made use of by Day is named Skinfaxi (or Shining-mane), and by his radiant mane he illuminates the air and the earth.”—*The Edda, Sixth Fable. Vide Mallet’s Northern Antiquities.*

NOTE 8.

“A secret dread creeps o’er his shrinking soul;
Through miles of darkness still he seeks the goal.”

“This parish abounds with many caves: some of these situated at Keil are of considerable dimensions, and have a very striking appearance. There is one of these caves from which, according to the tradition among the country people, a subterraneous passage extends six miles from the mouth of the cave to the hill of Killellern.”—*Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. iii.—Parish of Southend.

There is also a superstition existing among the country people that if any one ventures beyond a certain length in this cave it will close upon the over-inquisitive explorer. A piper of the Macdonalds is said to have entered boldly, playing *Cha till, cha till, cha till mi tuille* on his bagpipes, and was heard under ground for many miles. He never returned, however, as the cave is said to have closed and held him fast within its flinty walls!

NOTE 9.

“The time is nigh, a chieftain shall be born,
Whose hand shall smite the house of vaunting Lorn;
Bid its dull badge the weeping cypress wave,
Shed tears of blood upon its hero's grave:
That chief fair Caledonia's fate shall turn,—
The champion king, brave Bruce of Bannockburn!”

How far this prophecy was fulfilled every reader of Scottish history must know. Bruce routed the men of Lorn with great slaughter, and laid siege to the castle of Dunstaffnage, which he compelled to surrender. Alaster of Lorn submitted to the victorious King, whilst his son John fled to England. Skene, in his *History of the Highlanders*, goes on to say:—“The battle of Bannockburn soon after confirmed Bruce in the secure possession of the crown; and he was no sooner relieved from the apprehension of any further attempt on the part of the King of England to regain possession of Scotland, than he determined to drive the Lord of Lorn out of the Isles, where he had arrived with his fleet. The result of this expedition was the complete dispersion of the English fleet, and the seizure of John of Lorn, who was impi-

soned in Dumbarton, and afterwards in Lochleven, where he remained during the rest of Robert Bruce's reign."

NOTE 10.

"Shall send the poisonous current of your soul
In blighting streams to Hela's hopeless goal."

"Some reckon Loke in the number of the Gods; others call him
'The Artificer of Fraud,' &c. &c."

* * * * *

By the Giantess Angerbode, or Messenger of Ill, he hath likewise had three children. One is the wolf Feuris, the second is the great serpent of Midgard, and the third is Hela or Death. The Gods were not ignorant that those children were breeding up in the country of the Giants: they were apprized by many oracles of all the ~~evils~~ ^{ills} they must suffer from them. Their being sprung from such a Mother was but a bad presage, and from such a Sire was still worse. Wherefore the Universal Father despatched certain of the Gods to bring those children to him. When they were come, he threw the serpent down into the bottom of the ocean; but there the monster waxed so large, that he wound himself around the whole globe of the earth, and that so entirely, that at pleasure he can with his mouth lay hold of the end of his tail. Hela was precipitated into Nifheim, or Hell. There she had the government of nine worlds given her, into which she distributes those that are sent her; that is, all who die through sickness or old age. Her hall is Grief; Famine is her table; Hunger her knife; Delay her valet; Sickness her maid; Precipice her gate; Faintness her porch; Sickness and Pain her bed; and her tent Cursing and Howling."—*The Edda, Sixteenth Fable. Vide MALLER'S Northern Antiquities.*

NOTE 11.

“ Did not our fathers wed Norwegian blood ?
And hath not Elric shared their festal food ?
Hath he not entertained them at his board ?
Yet Scotland’s King must own the Island-Lord.
He then with Lorn hath joined in one great cause,
Life, Independence, scorn of human laws.
Let the invader’s foot but touch our strand,
And quick as lightning gleams our ready brand ;
Be he Norwegian, Saxon, kinsman dear,
His blood shall reek on many a clansman’s spear ! ”

“ As the Hebrides were at this time (A.D. 1230) under the subjection of the Norwegian King, the sons of Somerled appear to have acknowledged his authority ; but as these Sagas (the Norse Sagas) abound in complaints against their fidelity, they seem to have professed submission to either King, as best suited their object for the time, while in fact they were in a *state of actual independence*. ”—*The Highlanders of Scotland*, by WM. F. SKENE, F.S.A., part ii., chap. ii.

NOTE 12.

“His gallant mien, his broad, expanding chest,
In coat of mail and flowing mantle drest;
His well-made limb, in kilted garment free,
Displayed its vigorous beauty from the knee.”

“There is a complete chain of authorities for the dress of the Highlanders, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, having consisted of the Highland shirt stained with saffron, the Breacan or belted plaid, the short Highland coat, and the Cuaran or buskins, and that their limbs from the thigh to the ankle were certainly uncovered. Previous to the fourteenth century we cannot expect to find descriptions of the dress; but the existence of the same dress among the Highlanders can be established by another mode of proof. On the various tombstones of the ancient Highland chiefs, still extant in some of the ruined chapels of the western Highlands, are to be seen effigies of these personages represented, clad in armour, and almost invariably in the Highland dress.

“On the Duplin Cross, the date of which can, from various circumstances, be fixed to have been towards the end of the ninth century, there are a number of figures represented in the Highland garb, armed with the target and long spear. Another remarkable figure is found on the sculptured stone at Nigg, apparently of a still older date, in which the resemblance to the Highland dress is very striking, presenting also considerable indication of the sporran or purse.

“There is thus distinct evidence for the remote antiquity of this dress; but a very remarkable attestation to its use in the eleventh century still remains to be adduced.

“Magnus Barefoot, it is well known, conquered the Western Isles and a great part of the Highlands in the year 1093. Vari-

ous of the oldest Sagas, in mentioning that expedition, add the following sentence :—‘ It is said when King Magnus returned from his expedition to the west that he adopted the costume in use in the western lands, and likewise many of his followers ; that they went about barelegged, having short tunics and also upper garments, and so many men called him Barelegged or Bare-foot.’ ”—*The Highlanders of Scotland*, by WM. F. SKENE, F.S.A., part i., chap. ix.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.



MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

NOVEMBER.

It is cold, cold, cold, in the wild-wood now ;
It is cold by the beechen tree,
Where the red leaves dance on the mountain-brow,
And fly to the green, green sea.

It is wet, wet, wet, in the leaf-strewn grove ;
It is wet in the secret dell ;
The snail finds a home in the bower of love,
The winds in the hermit's cell.

It is bleak, bleak, bleak, in the western sky ;
It is bleak on the sedgy moor ;
Where Solitude starts at the bittern's cry,
Where the shepherd bars his door.

It is sad, sad, sad, in the lone church-yard ;
It is sad when the yew-trees moan ;
The voice of the dying year is heard
'Mong the tombs of the dead to groan.

It is dark, dark, dark, when the sun goes down ;
It is dark with yon cloudy moon ;
The angel of Hope from the earth hath flown
To bring garlands of freshness soon.

NOVEMBER 1851.



SONNET.

HAST thou ne'er felt upon a Sabbath morn,
When lonely wandering 'mid the wilds and woods,
Where sunny Silence softly smiles and broods,
A solemn feeling in thy bosom born,
Rising to reverend awe, and those still moods
The soul assumes when free, and purely shorn
Of the rude joys which worldlings nurse in scorn ;
Ne'er fancied 'mid the grandeur of the scene
That thou could'st hear upon the upland hill,
Where zephyrs slept 'mong shadows dark and still,
A whispering sound, as if there walked unseen
The ruling Spirit of the Morn serene ;—
There the all-present God of Sabbath moved :
Hast thou ne'er fancied this,—and musing feared,—
and loved ?


LINES ON THE DEATH OF CYNTHIA.

TELL, O tell me, beauty lingers
On my Cynthia's lovely face ;
Tell me not Destruction's fingers
Bear away each heavenly grace.

Though her eyes have ceased to utter
Words her lips could never say,
Still around her eyelids flutter
Angel smiles that mock decay.

Though her cheek has shed the flower,
Though her lips have ceased to move,
Still expression holds its power
O'er the charms that woke to love.

Tell me not she's gone for ever ;
Say not that she breathes no more ;
Sure I saw that bosom quiver,
Softly heaving as before !



Cynthia ! do not let me perish ;
Open quick thy hazel eye,
Lest the hope I warmly cherish
Leave me here to droop and die !

JANUARY 1842.

SAINT NINIAN'S TREE.

WHEN the moon is up the North sea 's dark.

When the moon is up the sky is bright.

Hoist the sails of my sable bark ;

Spread her wings to the breath of Night !

Like a spirit of Death she skims the tide,

Shunning the noonday light ;

She rests all day where the wild winds hide

In a cave of eternal night ;

Like a bird of prey

She sails away

O'er the sullen, sunless deep ;

And she seeks her foe

Where the night-winds blow

And whistle his soul to sleep.

The Reaver is up—the Reaver is gone—

His wife weeps on the shore ;

A finger of light, on the Druid's stone,

Writes, " You ne'er shall see him more."

The Reaver had drank of the blood-red wine,
Till his heart beat loud with glee;
He drank till he laughed at the Saint divine
In dark and fiendlike revelry.

Last night he danced on the hallowed grave,
And tost his knife on high;
He swore that the Church was the curse of the
brave,
The Saint had forged a lie.
He drank the wine, and sang with glee,
And danced and tramped on the fated tree:
The moon grew dim, the thunder rolled,
The sea-mew screamed with fear;
The startled bell in the turret tolled,
And the shade of the Saint drew near.

Let the wife of the Reaver of Sanda weep;
In vain shall she gaze through the dawn on the deep;
For no more shall the Reaver of Sanda come,
He hath danced o'er the tree on the sainted tomb.

NOTE.—“ In the island of Sanda are also situated the ruins of a chapel dedicated to St Ninian, together with two crosses of very rude design. In this burying-ground there is a superstitious

story, universally believed, respecting an alder-tree growing over the reputed grave of the saint, over which should any one walk, even by chance, he is doomed to die before a year expire."—*Statistical Account of Scotland*, part i.—Argyleshire, Parish of Southend.

NOVEMBER 1850.

SONNET.

THE ALPINE HORN.

HARK! 'tis the Alpine shepherd's rustic horn,
Wound to the sinking sun's last lingering ray!
"Praised be the Lord" on echo's wing is borne,
From cliff to cliff, upon its heavenward way.
On every hill, responsive to the call,
Full many horns their notes of praise prolong; ?
Whilst whispering grottos catch the sounds that fall,
And murm'ring softly imitate the song.
Lo! at each humble shepherd's cottage door
The grateful swain bows to his bounteous God;
Taught from his youth His mercy to implore,
To stay the elements—His chastening rod.
Now twilight comes, and silence deep distils
An awful grandeur o'er the everlasting hills.

NOTE.—"The Alpine Horn is an instrument constructed with the bark of the cherry-tree, and which, like a speaking-trumpet,
G

is used to convey sounds to a great distance. When the last rays of the sun gild the summit of the Alps, the shepherd who dwells highest on those mountains takes his horn and calls aloud 'Praised be the Lord !' As soon as he is heard, the neighbouring shepherds leave their huts and repeat those words, then bend their knees and pray in the open air, and soon after retire to their huts to enjoy the repose of innocence."—REICHARD.

FEBRUARY 1849.

THE INVOCATION.

THE cuckoo, from the greenwood tree,
Sings evening songs to Spring ;
And with the ringdove's lullaby
Harmonious echoes ring.

The rippling stream, with silver tongue,
Makes music soft and sweet ;
And whispering gales, the trees among,
The harmony complete.

Each flower to woo its neighbour flower
Assumes its fairest hue,
While nymphs around Retirement's bower
Their fairy garlands strew.

No clouds thro' ether floating roam,
Nor mark the azure sky ;
See, in the lake's revealing tome,
Heaven's pictured beauties lie.

Now Hope her taper lights anew,
Bright, glimmering from afar;
The world delighted holds in view
The fair Hesperian star.

Love wantons o'er the grassy mead
Where Cupids dance with glee,
And wait with roseate strings to lead
My true love forth to me.

Then come, my love, why lingerest thou
When all expectant smile?
Time loiters on yon mountain's brow,
Enchained with Beauty's wile.

Thy peerless charms, and modest mien,
Shed infinite delight,
As Cynthia's soft and silver sheen
Sheds beauty o'er the night.

And oh! thy swain who waits thee here,
'Neath Love's divine control,
Bids every warbling bird declare
Thee empress of his soul.

But, hark! I hear thy seraph voice
My languid ear beguile.
Earth, fare-thee-well, I'll now rejoice
In dreaming heaven awhile.

1842.

SONNET.

THE AURORA BOREALIS.

The Gods victorious from the wars return,
And hang their bucklers on the azure walls.
In bright Valhalla, see, the bale-fires burn,
Where Glory shines o'er War's insatiate urn !
Sweet music floats through Odin's lofty halls,
And tuneful planets swell th' empyreal strain;
Forth to the dance the Goddess Freya calls
Her snow-like vested, smiling, virgin train.
See, where their shadows flit athwart the sky,
Dim as the spirits of man's destiny.
Mysterious North! on whose unbudding plains
Crumbles the throne of Superstition's might;
Despite all change, with thee the power remains
To paint Time's shady dreams on mirror of the night.

DECEMBER 1850.

THE GRANDCHILD'S GRAVE.

'Tis here, beneath this willow tree,
Which o'er the streamlet ever weeps—
'Tis here, where wild flowers tempt the bee,
The fair, the loved Helena sleeps.

That little mound of starry grass,
Unmarked by tablet, tomb, or urn,
To bid the strangers, as they pass,
One glance of transient pity turn—

That little mound is now the home
Of all that cheered my blighted hearth;
My thoughts, my joys for ever roam,
And nestle near that mound of earth.

My kind Helena, canst thou hear,
My little grandchild, hear me now?
For thou wert ever smiling near,
To soothe my cares and aching brow!

When Sleep hath called her spirits down,
To deck each happy bed with dreams,
I seek this grave of tears alone,
Beneath the moon's congenial beams.

The waving fern, the whispering breeze,
Clouds drifting slowly, dark, and drear,
The sighs and shadows of the trees,
Have made me deem her spirit near.

Oh ! no, no, no, her soul is far
Away from saddening scenes like this ;
Perchance in yon bright twinkling star
She finds a home of changeless bliss.

Those dewdrops are the tears of love,
By angels wept upon her grave ;
For there are minist'ring throngs above
Who mourn the good, the pure, the brave.

ECHOES FROM THE BETTER LAND.

I.

Thoughts, like attendant angels, wait
To bless us 'mid tumultuous ills ;
And star-like Hope for ever fills
With sweetening draughts the cup of Fate.

In thought we commune with the dead,
But ever dreary is the theme—
More bright and joyful when we dream ;
Why have my sleeping thoughts all fled ?

Still we take pleasure in those hours
Spent with the friends we loved of yore—
Bright souls who smiling go before,
And cheer us to eternal bowers.

II.

Be still, my soul ! Grief 's not of Heaven,
Which ever clouds the mental sky ;

'Tis on the sea, when storms are by,
That ether's blue impress is given.


So the calm lake reflects the star
Which Evening wears upon her brow;
Thus may we catch some radiance now
From those bright souls who shine afar.

III.

The night-wind hath a hollow sound,
And moaneth sadly o'er those graves;
Courageous is the soul that braves
All fear, to wander o'er the ground.

But why this fear? Here are our friends,
Silent, yet present as of yore;
Oh! that they'd give us of their store
Of knowledge, gained where ours all ends.

There is a lustre round the dead
But rightly seen and felt by few;
The worldling's dogmas are untrue,
And robs the halo from their head.



IV.

Of those we loved the thoughts are strong,
Bright passages of memory !
Like silver lines upon the sea
Where home-bound ships have sailed along.

And we must follow in their track,
And bless them for the way they've shown.
If from our course by side-winds blown,
Still let us bravely struggle back.

The sea-anemone so bright,
With spreading beauty floats the tide ;
Such are the joys that tempt aside,
And sting us in our path of light.

V.

Flowers do not scorn to deck the sod,
And shed their lustre round the tomb ;
So hopes will rise to gild the gloom,
And cheer the path where sorrow trod.

'Tis well to tend these flowers, which seem
As bright as those our gardens grow,
For from the soil on which they blow
Beauties all sacred through them stream.


So let us nurse the thoughts serene
Which spring from sorrow's heaving mould :
Hope, Resignation, here unfold
A charm the thoughtless little ween.

VI.

If the departed ever bend
A watchful eye on those they've left,
They too must weep to see bereft
The bleeding hearts they loved to tend.

Does melancholy dwell in heaven ?
For some deem melancholy joy ;
Such souls as ever seek employ
In pouring balm where wounds are given.

There are no tears above : so then
This melancholy pleasure dies ;



But stay—we must not probe the skies,
Nor search where God forbids our ken.

VII.

The pliant oar on moonlit sea
Sends music to the watchful ear,
Through silver veil the boats appear
Like forms brought back to memory.

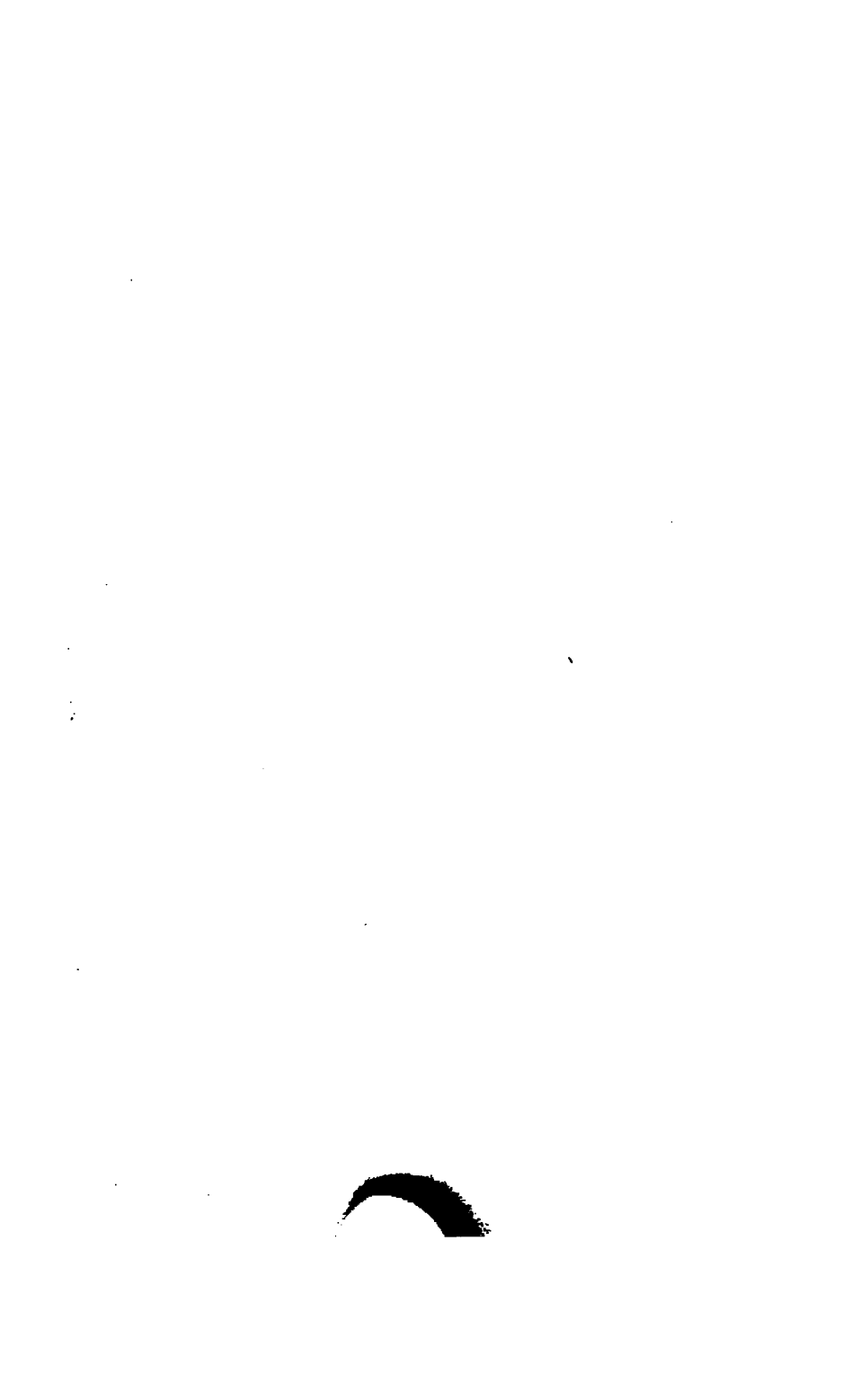
Friends on eternity's broad tide
Have launched their barks and sailed away;
Away! away! unheeded stray
Where mists and clouded darkness hide:

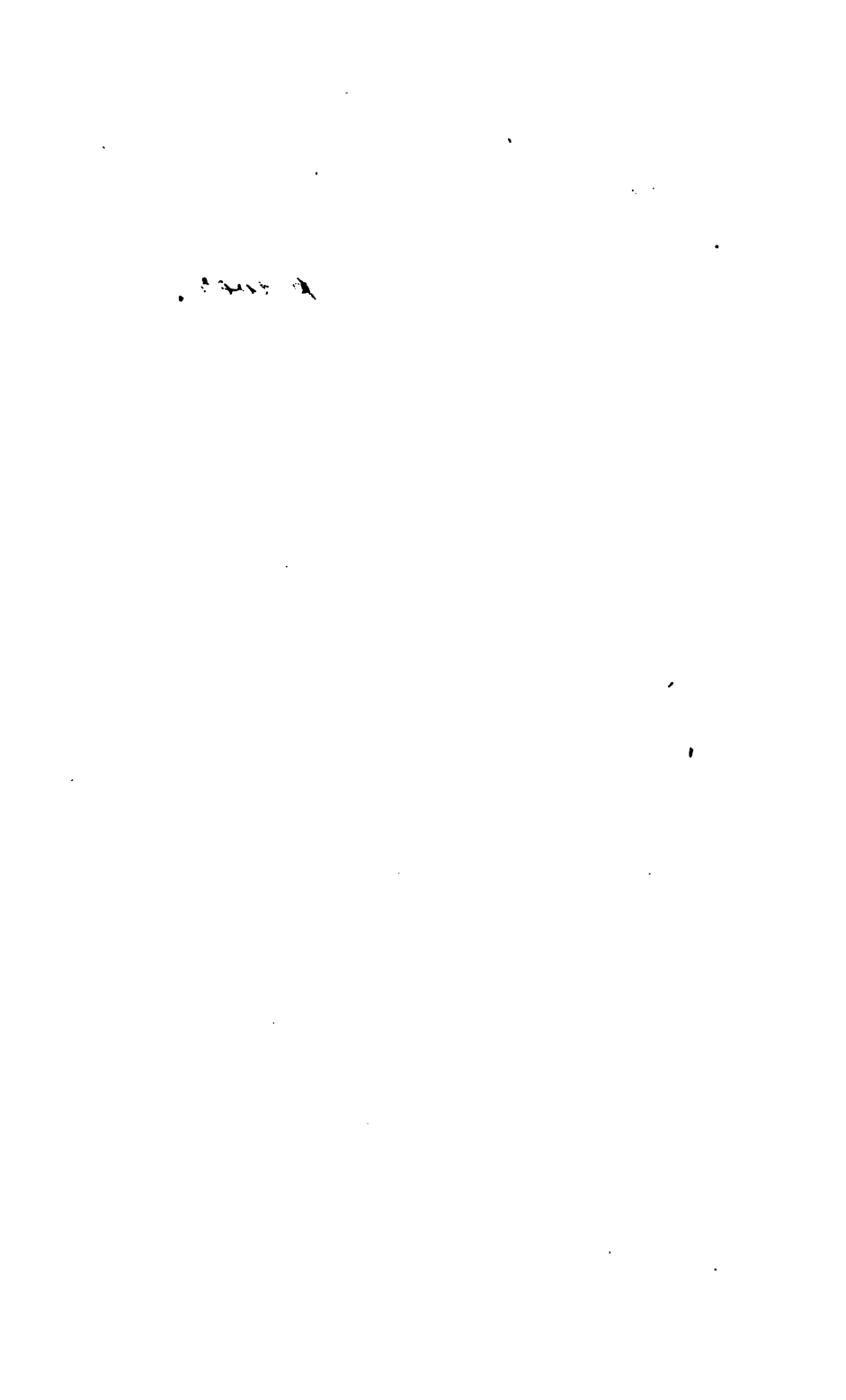
Till lone Reflection by the shore
Moonlike arrests our wandering eye;—
Rising o'er Death's obscurity,
Unveils the friends we loved of yore.

OCTOBER 1850.

THE END.







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